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# IMPERISHABLE DREAMS



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# IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

By  
LYNN HAROLD HOUGH



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TO MY FRIEND,  
REINHOLD NIEBUHR,

IN WHOSE WORDS AND WRITINGS THE  
YOUNGER GENERATION HAS ACHIEVED AN AL-  
MOST DISCONCERTING SINCERITY, AND A  
PENETRATING POWER OF ANALYSIS WHICH  
SEARCHES THE CONSCIENCE AND REFUSES THE  
COMFORT OF EVEN THE MOST DELICATE AND  
GRACIOUS SPIRITUAL SELF-DECEPTION



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
A WORD WITH THE READER.....	9
I. IMPERISHABLE DREAMS.....	13
II. THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED....	23
III. THE GLORY OF NATURE.....	31
IV. SOLOMON AND THE LILIES.....	53
V. THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM.....	67
VI. WE NEEDS MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST.	78
VII. ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE.....	91
VIII. THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN.....	103
IX. FELLOWSHIP.....	115
X. CHARLES DARWIN, EVOLUTION, AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.....	135
XI. CRITICISM AND THE CREATIVE IMPULSE	155
XII. THE TWO HIGHWAYS.....	171
XIII. "THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE".	194
XIV. "KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD IN THE MIND".....	207
XV. UNDERSTANDING AND PARADOX.....	221
XVI. EMANCIPATION AS A TEST OF TRUTH..	230
XVII. DECISION AND INSIGHT.....	242



## A WORD WITH THE READER

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH, in a characteristic study of that great seventeenth-century writer John Donne, in which he is thinking of him primarily as a poet, pays extraordinary tribute to the great preacher as a writer of sermons "which contain (as I hold) the most magnificent prose ever uttered from an English pulpit, if not the most magnificent prose ever spoken in our tongue." "Thus in his *Sermons*, if you seek, you will find the Donne I maintain to be the greater Donne, master of well-knit argument, riding tumultuous emotion as with a bridle, thundering out fugue upon fugue of prose modulated with almost impeccable ear." Even those of us who are poor pedestrians walking humbly far from those mountain cliffs where the royal figure of Donne was seen can surely be pardoned if we take new courage as we remember that a sermon may be a masterpiece of "well-knit argument riding tumultuous emotion as with a

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

bridle." If standing in great pulpits actually made a great preacher, how happily some of us could qualify! Even ■ it is, I dare say we find it difficult not to gather the robes of gracious memory about us and fancy that our own small utterances gain new dignity when they are spoken in places redolent with the memory of the great voices.

The sermons on "The Glory of Nature" and "Emancipation as a Test of Truth" in the present collection were preached at Carr's Lane Congregational Church in Birmingham, whose pulpit, with all its memories of Dale and Jowett and Dr. Sidney Berry, is being maintained with commanding power under the masterful ministry of Mr. Leyton Richards. The sermons on "The Mastery of Freedom" and "We Needs Must Love the Highest" were delivered in the City Temple in London, where one listens to-day to ■ voice of singular penetration and power as Dr. Frederick Norwood speaks, and remembers the glory that was Parker, the delicate spiritual grace which characterized the ministry of Dr. R. J. Campbell, and the subtle sensitive strength of Dr. Joseph Fort

## A WORD WITH THE READER

Newton's speech. The sermon "Understanding and Paradox" was preached in the beautiful chapel of Mansfield College at Oxford, a preaching place which offers its own stern tests and its own noble appreciation. "Criticism and the Creative Impulse" was delivered in Appleton Chapel of Harvard University. For nine years I have spent two happy Sundays each year as the guest of the University of Chicago. On one of these Sundays the sermon, "The Two Highways," was preached. "The Revenge of the Rejected" was delivered in the beautiful new chapel which has a place all its own among such structures on the continent. Of the other sermons the majority were preached in the Central Methodist Episcopal Church of Detroit, where for eight years I looked out on a congregation whose generous receptiveness and loyal support gave me a happiness which cannot be captured in a net of appreciative words.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH.

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Montreal, Quebec.



## I

### IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

"And, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven."—*Genesis* 28. 12.

WE are all dreamers. There are dull lives, and heavy lives, and cold and unilluminated lives. But there are no dreamless lives. In men of sluggish imagination dreams may emerge slowly and cautiously as if not sure of their welcome. But they emerge. Even in the most wintry lives they glow with a red radiance against the cold sky. And sometimes they flame with a sudden dart of hot intensity.

To be sure, there are dreams and dreams. There are dreams which edge common days with a purple pattern of romance. There are dreams which play across the hours of sleep with a sly persistence. All our Might Have Beens come to visit us in the night. And they walk in upon us through the portals of sleep.

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

We may be haunted by dark and decadent dreams. In our own times dreams have taken upon themselves a new and sinister significance. For have not the Freudians told us that dreams are the ghosts of inhibited desires; that the indulgences for which we crave, but to which we will not surrender, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, will not rest, but comes marching into our dreams, and prepares from the fortress of the subconscious to storm our lines of resistance and to beat them down at last? There is much to say about this whole matter of inhibited desire, and the poisonous vapors which the subconscious life throws off in the hours of sleep. What comes back from the under world of the mind comes back because it was sent there first. If we send good and beautiful thoughts into this vast house of waiting in the subconscious life, good and beautiful things will return. When we are fighting an evil thing we may stop with the mere tension and send that down into the subconscious life, where it will make much disturbance and create profound unrest. But we do not have to do that. We can fight on until we come to great and creative joy in vic-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

tory, and great happiness in the possession of the good which is the opposite of the evil we had been fighting, and if we send this gladness in victory into the subconscious, a kind of creative moral joy will come back to re-enforce us in all our future years. But suppose we take the Freudian principle as it stands. Suppose we admit that an inhibited desire for evil will come back to plague us in our dreams. That is only one half the story. An inhibited desire for goodness will behave in just the same way. The goodness we have desired but have not admitted to a place of command in our lives will come back to haunt us in imperishable dreams. The power of inhibited goodness is one of the real moral forces of the world.

Take the case of Jacob. He came of a pious and godly line. From his father, and especially from his grandfather, there had come into his life a tradition of deep religious earnestness and of profound devotion to God. Jacob himself was a young miscreant. In an ugly sense he was a liar and a thief. If he wanted a thing, he used the means at hand to get it, without taking the trouble to ask disagreeable questions as to their pro-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

priety. At last he filled his home with such an atmosphere of hostility and hate that he was forced to fly for his life. None of his evil impulses seem ever to have been treated to a course of inhibition. He was a distinctly bad sort.

And this scheming, lying, unprincipled youth, on his first night away from home, lies among the stones in the wilderness and dreams the loveliest possible dream of a way from earth to heaven and of ascending and descending angels! It is not difficult to analyze the situation in the light of the insights of contemporary psychology. At last Jacob finds himself alone, away from the temptation to selfish double-dealing, and in the silence and loneliness of the night in the wilderness, the idealism which he has so long ignored, the piety which he has so long inhibited, breaks out to haunt his very dreams. His subconscious life has been holding this treasure, and now it is sent flashing forth with its radiant light filling all of dreamland with its celestial beauty. Duplicity and double-dealing and hard selfishness are lost in a flood of heavenly light. It is clear enough that if it is true that the evil we

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

inhibit often returns to plague us, it is equally true that the good we inhibit comes forth to capture our imaginations and to conquer our allegiance. Dreamland is the rendezvous of angels as well as the meeting place of beasts.

The race as well as the individual inherits a vast subconscious life. Here too there are serpents and wild beasts. Here too there are golden treasures of goodness and beauty and truth. Every ancient good is ready to emerge from the cool recesses of our subconscious life to haunt us with imperishable dreams. In another sense than Robert Browning had in mind when he wrote "Abt Vogler" we may declare that there is no lost good. Old heroisms, old aspirations, old saintliness, old strength of character, lie waiting in the treasure house of the subconscious. In any wilderness where we are sleeping we too may see the ladder on which radiant forms move with the assurance and confidence of a deathless strength. If the tiger and the ape move tragically through the purple land of dreams, we may be reassured when we see the heavenly visitants who move there all ready to claim for God the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

first clear consciousness of our waking hours. It would be quite false, then, to say that the evil we inhibit comes back to leer upon us in the dark, while the good we inhibit fades into thin air and never returns. Goodness has a fine and almost terrible persistence of its own. If we will not give it a place in our waking hours, it is ready to come and haunt our dreams. The most hopeful and encouraging apparition in all the world is the ghost of the ideal we think we have buried beyond the possibility of resurrection.

Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" is the tale not of a pursuing conscience, but of a pursuing friend. The universe itself as this marvelous poem interprets it does not seem large enough to offer a shelter to the fearful spirit pursued by the persistent purpose of the friendly God. All the while below the surface of every experience in life is the sound of those pursuing feet. As murderers are pursued by memories of their crimes, even so are men pursued by memories of their ideals. The man who thinks he can play with the vision splendid, which in his youth his way attended, has little learned of

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

what tenacious stuff ideals are made. In the most unexpected places, under the most unbelievable conditions, the old hope emerges, the old aspiration becomes articulate. "What! you here!" we say as we see the face worn with waiting and marked by all the strain of the disillusioning years. And the discarded ideal stands before us with eyes glowing with an immortal beauty. Old vices may seem to have terribly powerful fingers. In reality, their strength does not compare with the viselike grip of an ancient virtue.

When in the midst of the storm in the forest young Martin Luther surrendered to God, he was, of course, surrendering to voices which he had vainly tried to crush out in the busy exhilarating activities of student life. With a fierce power beyond even the power of his father's shrewd practical ambition Luther heard these insistent voices calling out the summons of the great God who asked for all his life. The storm wildly driving among the trees, the darting lightning, the crash which made the sky articulate contrived to bring to a crisis what had been persistently at work below the level of

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

his conscious life. What seemed to happen in a moment was the climax of what had been going on for years. Martin Luther too had been haunted by imperishable dreams.

Success is often more disillusioning than failure. When a man fails to realize his ambition, he may go to his grave supposing that it would have brought him satisfactions which in reality it had no power to give. But if he stands at last upon the very height upon which he has looked with eager eyes, he learns the real quality of his ambition. And very often that hour brings complete disillusionment. The thing he has won does not possess the sterling quality he had ascribed to it. And in the very disillusionment of gratified ambition, in the disappointment of success, in the terribly honest insight of the hour of victory, he hears other voices. He listens, surprised at first. Is it possible that these youthful dreams still persist? Is the idealism he had thought he had thrown aside alive in his heart after all the burdened and battling years? And so, in the moment when he had supposed he would find complete emancipation from the dreams of

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

his unselfish youth, they return with a singular potency. Inhibited goodness is having its hour at last. He too is haunted by imperishable dreams.

This sort of experience is much more widely diffused than the cynics would be willing to have us believe. And even men of good will scarcely realize how the forces on the side of the angels keep moving from the rocky wildernesses to the heavenly heights. Indeed, there is a deep and poignant authenticity about the return of discarded ideals which is one of the most tragic even as it is one of the most glorious facts of human life.

Christianity has a way of sharpening the experience, because under its influence we meet it in the terms of the compulsion of the personality of Jesus Christ. An ideal loses all its vagueness when it looks upon you through his eyes. An aspiration loses all its dimness when it sings with the assurance of his voice. Our rarest and most radiant dreams become flesh and blood as we behold him walking down our streets. An exotic spiritual experience becomes a simple practical demand when he interprets its meaning

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

to us. And all the goodness we had called impractical becomes somehow curiously within reach as we gaze into his face. That is the real difference between the Old Testament life and the experience which unfolds in the New. Jacob dreamed of a ladder with angels coming and going, a ladder all shining with celestial light. We can scarcely see the angels. Our eyes are held by one compelling figure. And if we are tempted to think it all a fading picture of iridescent loveliness, we fix our eyes on strange marks upon his hands. Strangely enough, it is the nails which take it all out of the realm of fantasy and bring it into the region of sober and dependable reality. So we dare to believe that imperishable dreams may become triumphant achievements.

## II

### THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

“The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.”—*Psa.* 118. 22.

TOWARD the end of the Civil War in the United States, Mrs. Jefferson Davis wrote to a friend as she beheld the Confederacy tottering: “The cohesive power of a strong government is needed when the disintegrating tendency of misery is at work. . . . I am disheartened with . . . State sovereignty.” The Southern States had gone out of the Union in protesting against the principle that each State must obey the federal authority. They asserted the contrary principle—that each State had the right to do as it pleased. But in order to have any sort of hope of winning the war the Confederate States required a strong central government in which each State unhesitatingly accepted the military authority of the State above the States. For military purposes

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

they had to call in the very principle in protest against which they had broken away from the Union. It was a disconcerting situation, as that very brilliant woman, Mrs. Jefferson Davis, saw. The stone which these Confederate builders rejected had become the head of the corner.

We may well check any tendency to proud and scornful feelings when we contemplate the dilemma of Mrs. Jefferson Davis by calling to mind the fashion in which we ourselves have been betrayed by the same sort of experience. Once and again the principle which we have disdained has secured for itself subtle and satisfactory revenge. Indeed, the whole tale of human society is full of this resurrection of principles which had been considered dead and quite safely buried. To go back to the metaphor from the one hundred and eighteenth psalm: "The stone which the builders rejected has a way of becoming the head of the corner."

Take this very matter of highly centralized authority. For more than a century democracy has been winning victories all about the world. During the Great War between 1914 and 1918, someone invented

## THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

the slogan, "This is a bad day for kings." The victories of individual rights glittered all along the nineteenth century and the Great War in one final cataclysmic movement seemed about to bring democracy to its final hour of fulfillment. The people had come to their great hour. The individual was to be released from all chaining inhibitions. The ghost of Thomas Jefferson might return complacently to survey a world made after the fashion of his heart's desire. Even Proudhon might have come back with a smile not without satisfaction, even if there hovered about it some sense of inscrutable irony.

But somehow most disconcerting questions managed to get themselves asked as men counseled together: "Was democracy proving efficient? Could the emancipated individual do the work of this complex and confusing world? Could divergent and hostile individuals giving free play to all their crass individual equality make together a noble and inspiring society?"

Once such questions are asked, especially if there is the pressure of tremendous practical necessities behind them, the whole situation begins to change. Mussolini becomes

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

■ symptom if not a portent. The efficient autocrat quite unhesitatingly asserts his place in ■ world whose whole quality had been feeling the influence of democratic sanctions for one hundred years. All about the world the apostles of efficiency are brushing the apostles of democracy aside. Just as the era of Prince Metternich followed the downfall of Napoleon in 1815 and gave definite power to the life of Europe until 1848, so a new wave of reaction has set in all about the world. The principle we had disdained is having curiously potent revenge.

Actually the movement may quite as easily turn in the opposite direction. As a matter of fact, it has often been so. From the time of Hugh Capet in the tenth century, France became gradually more highly centralized until the reign of Louis XIV found an autocratic control in complete possession of the State, and the phrase put into the lips of Louis, "L'état c'est moi," represented crisply and adequately enough the actual situation. But all the splendor of the highly centralized French monarchy represented a complete ignoring of those human rights which have their own vitality and which keep

## THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

calling in the hearts of men even when the call is unheeded. The principle of individual liberty and right of initiative was scorned in autocratic France. Then came the French Revolution. "Liberty, equality, and fraternity became the watchwords of the hour." The old regime went down in fire and fury. The principle which had been ignored and then despised secured its own terrible revenge. The stone which the autocratic builders had rejected was made the head of the corner.

The process which we are discussing may be studied not only in political relationships but in every field of human discussion and human activity. There is, for instance, the matter of the material and the spiritual. Here we seem to come upon a dualism which is sharply and clearly enough defined. Here we see clinched antagonisms ready for the bitterest contention. But here too, if you succeed in asserting one principle and repudiating the other, the very hour of triumphant assertion is the beginning of a movement which at last brings the opposite principle into action again.

The decadent days of Greece and Rome

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

saw the physical in rather secure command of the interest of men. The body sat powerfully if not grandly upon the throne. Vice moved off into margins of abnormal excess. Men became experts in the subtle experience of physical sensation. The epicure of exotic and sensual temper did more than taste the fruit of the tree. There is a bitter and terrible passage in Mr. Gilbert Chesterton's fine little book on Saint Francis, which tells what a garden became in the days of most complete moral decadence.

It was in upon such a world that Christianity came with its austere purity and its high and commanding moral code. The world which was sated with trying to satisfy the hunger of the soul at the table where only the hunger of the body was fed leaped upon the new faith with avidity. The ascetic principle became the commanding sanction. That very self-denial which a world in decay had derided became the supremely desirable thing in the minds of men. The body was despised in the name of the soul. The physical was degraded in the name of the spiritual. Men turned from a beauty which they had betrayed to a beauty which brought no mem-

## THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

ories of hectic indulgence and no thoughts of unbridled license. The ascetic became the hero of Europe. The man who despised the world became the man who held the conscience of the world in his hands. The stone of asceticism which the builders rejected became the head of the corner.

But the tale was not yet complete. The centuries of ascetic self-denial possessed their own arrogant disdain. They disdained the body. They disdained the material. They disdained this present world. And slowly the revenge of the discarded beauty of this present world prepared to come like a tempest upon the sanctities of the Middle Ages. At last the day of Renaissance arrived. Once more in sheer delight men welcomed the beauty of spring and all the beauty of spring flowers. They drank in with palate all the more full of relish for the centuries of denial, all the wine of life which asceticism had condemned. They loved the beauty of the human form. They developed exquisite taste for every delicate and alluring sensation of pleasure. They brought back the sense of the fascination of the physical world. They revived the classic beauties and they

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

learned again the secrets of fascinating vices half buried by the oblivion of time. The voluptuary once more mounted the throne. It was a stone symbolic of all material gratification and of all material pleasures which was now brought back from the days of its rejection and made the head of the corner.

So the process has gone on like the swinging of a strange, mad pendulum. The principle which is disdained is all the while returning in royal robes. If you disdain the body, you are preparing for its day of triumph. If you disdain the soul, you are preparing for its coronation.

It seems inevitable that understanding minds will be profoundly dissatisfied by this alternating power of mutually hostile principles. The very extremes produced by intense periods of reaction are most evil elements in the life of the world. It is just a little difficult to say whether the evils of autocracy are more tragic than those of anarchy. But without attempting too nice discrimination it is clear enough that either extreme becomes a menacing force in the life of the world. So it is with the matter of the material and the spiritual. The hard

## THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

and metallic economic materialism and the soft and rotting physical materialism do a bitter and intolerable work in the world. And if we are driven from these things to an arid and unearthly spirituality which despises all the normal human relationships, this extreme extorts unbelievably heavy taxes from the whole social organism of which we are a part.

We begin to look for a synthesis which does justice to the positive element in hostile principles and saves us from their extreme manifestations. When we are thinking of the political world we begin to suspect that life is not a circle with the individual at the center. That interpretation would involve us in anarchy at last. We begin to suspect that life is not a circle with the state or some autocrat at the center. That interpretation would involve us at last in intolerable tyranny. We begin to suspect that life is an ellipse with two foci—the individual and the state. In this interpretation we see that the two foci mutually check and interpret each other. The individual receives all the liberty and all the power which is consistent with the common good. The state exercises all the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

authority which it can hold without crushing the individual. In the matter of the material and the spiritual we look for the same sort of synthesis. And we begin to perceive its possibility when we come to see that it is the very nature of the material to bear the impress of the spiritual. The physical is not the foe of the spiritual. The physical is meant to be the instrument of the spiritual. Plato was so sure of this that he declared that things are real only in so far as they participate in their ideal form. If it is the essential meaning of matter that it is meant to express and be dominated by spiritual meanings, all of life may be seen in glorious and new relationships. The ugly dualism of sense and spirit disappears. It is a pardonable exaggeration to assert with Browning that the soul does not help the flesh more than the flesh helps the soul.

A building like the chapel in which we worship this morning is an amazing illustration of the power of the spiritual to bend the material to its purposes, to make the physical its instrument. The very massiveness of this building makes all the more impressive its power to express spiritual mean-

## THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

ings of awe and reverence and all the unseen and ineffable splendors of the world of aspiration and hope and divine fellowship. In a sense the very building becomes a symbol of that unity of diverse elements in noble harmony in which all the activities of a great university find their final crown.

Quite inevitably we seek for a figure which will adequately represent this meeting of diversity in living unity, this resolving of discords into harmony. When we have once understood that to see life steadily and to see it whole is to see it as a unity which makes room for diversity, we may well remember that personality itself is the best example of this possibility. Is there, then, one Personality who is the supreme expression of the meeting in living harmony of the principles which in isolation seem so hostile?

The very question leads us to a fresh approach to the person of Jesus. In him the Greek love of light and the Hebrew love of righteousness met in gracious accord. In him the austere sense of spiritual beauty met with a hearty human quality which caused his foes scornfully to call him a friend of winebibbers and sinners. In him the body

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

became the happy and responsive servant of the spirit. He believed in the individual, yet to him the individual was always part of something larger, a branch of the great vine, an organic part of a full rich life. Clinched antagonisms had a way of being reduced to noble harmony in his experience and in his teaching.

After the first overwhelming defeat of Napoleon the Congress of Vienna met to rearrange the map of Europe. But one day there was a muttering in the corridors. And soon the whisper ran around the table where the men who thought they were the masters of Europe sat—"He is coming back: he is coming back." The Congress of Vienna faded away when Le Petit Caporal landed in France. Napoleon returned for only one hundred days. I know of a Figure which has been consigned to oblivion in many a century. The mental map of the world has been all arranged with no place for him. The moral map has been remade far from the fashion of his heart's desire. But he always comes back. After scorn and hatred and cool indifference and caustic arrogance have done their worst he always returns.

## THE REVENGE OF THE REJECTED

Perhaps it is just because all the vital principles of thought and life find in him a unity which releases their nobler potencies and gives a new harmony to life, that he possesses this power of perpetual return. There is something final about the ancient words when we apply them to him: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner."

### III

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,

The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained."—*Psalm* 8. 3.

ALEXANDER POPE is not precisely one of our admirations to-day. Yet we do spend a good deal of our time living according to one of his terse dicta. We behave as if we believed that the proper study of mankind is man. Human relationships come to us trailing out of the past. They reach far into the future. They dominate the present. We think about them. We write books about them. We try to solve the problems which have to do with the fashion in which men shall be able to live together effectively and fruitfully and joyously. All this is just as it should be, for these matters are of transcendent importance. But all the while there is another group of relationships which we

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

ought not to ignore. The natural world in which we live is the basis and the background of an enormous part of our experience. What is our relation to all the forces of nature? What is our relation to the material world? In every age man has faced this great contemporary of nature. Men have considered the heavens, the moon and the stars, and all the other phenomena of this vast and mysterious physical universe. The Old Testament poet saw it all through the eyes of his faith in God. Is it still possible for us to do this to-day? Is nature our friend or our foe? Is nature for us or against us ■ we catch visions of moral and spiritual splendor and attempt to make them real? Is there ■ view of nature which belongs to the very essence of the Christian faith? To such questions ■ these we would give life ■ we think together this morning of the glory of nature.

It may seem that the very title we have chosen begs the whole question. It may seem that it commits us in advance to ■ happy and optimistic conclusion. We will not deny that it does express the outcome of our thought. But we hope to conduct the discus-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

sion in such a fashion that there can be no just accusation of lack of complete candor. We hope to face frankly the difficulties which we meet along the way.

There was a period when men took nature for granted. It never occurred to anyone to ask strange and probing questions. The glad springtime and the golden harvest were accepted as just what one would expect. Life was a unity, and man felt himself to be a part of the natural world. We may feel very superior to all this in the critical period in which we live. But perhaps the advantage is not all on our side. The Greeks still possessed this primitive attitude toward nature and even the ruins of their temples give us a sense that they are a part of the landscape where they stand. It is difficult to think of a particular hill without a particular temple. Our modern buildings very often seem to stand with clenched fists waiting to fight their environment. And we often feel that if a particular building could speak, it would say, "Why in the world am I here?" That easy and assured sense of being part of the unity of an undivided life represents an attitude upon which it is hard

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

not to look back wistfully. Indeed, we remember that it was long before distinctions which seem very fundamental to us emerged among the Greeks. Even when Anaxagoras used the word "nous," and men began to think of mind, it is at least possible to believe that for a long time mind was regarded as only a subtler form of matter. But, of course, this sense of unity could not continue in this form. The divisions emerged. They became more sharp. And man began to see himself as over against nature rather than as a part of nature. The Elijah story, with its tempestuous storm, its flashing lightning, and its trembling earth, gives us a vivid sense of the mysterious awe which nature aroused. And the consciousness that the voice of gentle stillness within was the voice to which man must listen gives us the sense of the spirit of man on one side, and the natural forces as unable to penetrate that sanctuary of the spirit. The Garden of Eden story frankly sets man in a hostile environment with which he must contend. Eden may be a haunting memory. The battle with nature represents the hard and inescapable fact. We can easily understand how many aspects

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

of nature fitted in with this sense of a hostile power. For heat and cold, drought and flood, tempest and earthquake once and again flung man aside helpless and defeated before mighty forces which he could not control.

Man set about mastering nature. There were forces which in a measure he could use. The planting of seed did normally lead to the harvest. The lifted sail could use the friendly breeze. But for centuries man had no suspicion of those uniformities in nature which make it possible for us to harness such mighty forces. The day came at last when steam was captured and turned to the purposes of man. Franklin's kite was the precursor of the electrical age. And now we can write in the sky and speak on wings which seem to annihilate space itself. The attempts to make nature an ally have come to a consummation beyond the most daring dreams. In a new sense we feel at home in the world as we make natural laws our slaves by obeying them. We do not always make a noble use of our great power. In my own city I have watched a daring aviator writing vast words upon the sky. And when the

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

message from among the clouds came to be read, it turned out to be an announcement of a brand of cigarette. We learn secrets in respect of chemistry which give us the most stupendous power. And we use these secrets for the purposes of human destruction upon a scale of almost unimaginable terror. We may not be worthy of all this conquest of nature. But at least in vast areas nature has become our ready slave.

It is impossible, however, to ignore the implacable aspect of nature. Calamities like the Japanese earthquake remind us that the powers resident in the material world break out in a fashion quite beyond man's control and leave dark devastation in their wake. The study of the processes of nature is not an entirely reassuring thing. We remember how Huxley declared that nature is all the while doing all the things which we consider crimes when perpetrated by men. The biological process has its own tale of terrible cruelties to tell. When a man has been investigating these things it is not hard to understand his reaching the conclusion that at its best nature is indifferent to the higher life of man and at its worst crashes down upon

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

all the edifice of ethical and spiritual life with a frightfulness which would be diabolical if it were conscious. If science has revealed a uniformity upon which we can depend and which we can turn to our own purposes, it has also revealed a brutality which seems to have no smallest consciousness of moral values. We can understand how Tennyson in one mood spoke of nature as half concealing and half revealing the soul within, and in another found phrases sharp with moral revulsion to describe that tooth and nail which contend with what seems like unethical brutality upon the fields of life.

The desire to find an ally in nature, however, does not easily surrender to the consciousness of hard and implacable forces. And that desire easily rises to include the moral and the spiritual life of man. There is something in the human spirit which finds nature to be sacramental. All this has been expressed by many men in many ways. Probably its most perfect expression is to be found in the poetry of Wordsworth. That nature which was like a nun silent in adoration ever spoke with moral majesty and spiritual loftiness to him. That something far

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

more subtly interfused was a commanding reality to him, and nature possessed not only a voice but many voices, all speaking of beauty and truth and goodness and love. There comes from the poetry of Wordsworth a sort of noble and brooding quiet which seems the very essence of a message which nature spoke to his soul. There must be few men and women of sensitive and responsive spirit to whom at times nature has not seemed to speak in the very accents which Wordsworth has made articulate in words so full of loveliness and serene joy. There are nights at sea and there are sunsets in the mountains when nature seems opulent with a beauty which calls to the depths of the spirit of man. It is probable that in spite of nature's darker moods few men find it possible to feel that it is hostile amid the flowers of springtime or all the bountiful gifts of the harvest.

We must admit, however, that a good many people can think only with deep scorn of this attempt to find a friend and even a priest of the spirit in nature. A man like Mr. Bertrand Russell, with the structure of his thought firmly built upon a basis of un-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

yielding despair, very well represents the opposite attitude. To such a mind as that of Russell consciousness is an accident, rationality has no sure basis in the structure of things. Goodness has no home in the universe. Spirituality is the shadow of a shadow without abiding truth in the world of actuality. When we place Bertrand Russell and William Wordsworth together we seem to have brought near to each other the finally opposing attitudes toward the vast system of things in which we find ourselves. We can hear the tone of utter intellectual distaste in which Russell is ready to condemn men who build their own egotism into a view of nature and think of the world as if it were built to further their plans and make possible the fulfillment of their desires. And we can witness the fierce pride which declares that it must face every fact even if that fact reduces man to hopelessness.

At first all this seems wonderfully impressive, though there is something just a little strange in man—the accident, the shadow, the meaningless flash of consciousness in an unconscious universe—rising to such noble heights of unselfish intellectual integrity.

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

But as we think a little more deeply we begin to feel that the question is not so simple that it can be dealt with even in infinitely distinguished phrases of intellectual disillusionment and courageous willingness to live in a universe which has no sound basis for the ethical life. And, after all, the question is not simply one of man's egoism. The men who have been willing to be burned for a moral and spiritual ideal are at least as free from ugly egoism as the men who are willing to summon heroism enough to live in a universe which has lost its power to say, "Thou shalt not" in hours of hectic passion. The whole moral and spiritual history of man is just as much a series of facts as are any aspects of material movement and activity. And this series of facts must also be treated with scientific respect. The moral and spiritual ideal has received supreme expression in the personality of Jesus Christ, and the profound question is not "Is man's egotism to be satisfied by nature?" The penetrating question is "Is nature hostile or friendly to that moral and spiritual ideal which lives in the personality of Jesus? Is nature his friend or his foe?" There is something in-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

finitely more important than the gratification of human desire to be considered. And that is the very quality of the light which has flashed into the lives of the best men and which lived in perfection in one unique Character. Nature must be judged by its relation to him and to all for which he stood. Your personal and selfish desires and mine may be of little enough significance. But it is not a matter of racial egotism to ask if nature has a place for Jesus, if it is the friend of that type of character which he perfectly expressed. As a matter of fact, he is the condemnation of our egotism and not its justification, and there are moods in which we would feel more comfortable in a universe which had no place for the utter loftiness of his moral and spiritual demands. In any event, we would bring nature not before the bar of humanity but before the bar of Christ.

It is in such an attitude as this that we must confront nature with a challenging demand to know whether it is the friend or the foe of Jesus and all for which he stands. Now, the moment we begin to analyze the matter we see that the very essence of the

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

character of Jesus was goodness based upon decision. To him life's business was just the terrible choice. And the very central matter with him was the moral and spiritual courage which is willing to take risks in the name of a great ideal. And the very foundation of such courageous choice is in a world which offers a solid basis for the belief in goodness and yet perpetually leaves room for the possibility of hesitation and doubt and negative decision. Jesus took all the moral risks of believing that the universe was on his side. His very certainty was the moral certainty which comes after the taking of risks. His confidence was the confidence of a great and glorious adventure. It was not a mechanical or static thing. And character must always be built upon moral risk. Where there is no element of possible uncertainty there is no possibility of moral character. A world in which assurance came as a result of mathematical or mechanical demonstration, and not as a result of moral and spiritual adventure, would be the worst possible world for the development of character.

We begin to see, then, that the natural world in which we live is the very sort of

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

world in which moral and spiritual character can be nobly developed. It contains just those dark and difficult elements which lift hard questions. It contains just those noble elements which give a basis for the life of faith. Jesus gathered all this material into his life of noble risk and of the great assurance of faith. And this is precisely the thing which we can do. Nature is the friend of the moral life of courage and choice in just the sense that it provides the best sort of material for these great elements of character. If the object of life is the sort of discipline and faith and growth and moral and spiritual victory found in Jesus, then nature offers to men just what their deepest life really needs. It would be terribly tragic if we could be too sure before the great acts of choice and faith. Such a world would take away the very foundations of the moral life.

It ought not to be hard for a nation which has produced a great race of sailors to understand all this. The sea has many a tragic tale to tell. It has its dark and terrible moods. And all of its strange might of tempest is a part of that challenge which has

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

produced the great seafaring men of the world. A sea with no storms would produce no great sailors. Just the sort of ocean we know makes possible those mighty men of the sea of whom the history of life on the seven seas tells so much. The sea sometimes seems the foe of the sailor. But viewing the matter largely, we may say that the sea is the friend of character. It calls for courage and patience and strength. And it tells its great secrets only to those who conquer it.

So that natural world which is represented by the heavens which we survey even as we walk the streets of cities, and the moon and the stars which look curiously into the windows of our urban homes, offers to man just that combination of elements which makes it possible for choice to be made and for character to be secured.

We will judge the biological process finally not merely by its relentless and remorseless struggle. We will see the principle of motherhood and self-sacrifice, as well as the principle of self-assertion, all along the line. And we will judge the process by its consummation, and not merely by its history. As Professor Simpson has suggested,

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

we may see in Jesus Christ the consummation of the whole evolutionary process. And we may judge its history by its outcome. In the lovely lake country of Canada a reader of many books who knew the tale of the biological process as modern science tells it was walking by bright, blue waters among noble trees. The cruel story of struggle with all its hard remorselessness and its thrust of physical desire seemed for the moment to be all there was to the long tale. But as the evening wore on and the golden purple beauty of sunset filled the west, as the light came seeking his eyes through the many-leaved branches of the trees, as the waters of the lake lay quiet in the distance, as the evening calm fell upon the world, in the shining west he seemed to see one great and mastering Face. He had come out of all this process. It was all on the way to him. It had at every step been moving toward him. And it had a way of casting aside, step by step and stage by stage, all that opposed the onward movement. His moral insight, his spiritual victory was the very goal of it all. The biological process found its crown in him. And so the evening was full of a

## THE GLORY OF NATURE

sense of the very splendor of the living God.

The choice is before us all. We may regard nature as the foe of all our loftiest moral insights and our noblest spiritual aspirations. And we may sink to low levels because we think it is useless to fight against nature. Or we may judge all of nature by the highest product which has appeared in the world. We may see everything through the eyes of Jesus. And so seeing all the natural world all the biological process will be transformed. We will find in nature the friend of conscience and the ally of the soul. We will feel at home in the universe as we have never felt at home before. And the very fact that it requires courage to make the choice of faith will mean that character strong and high will be developed. We are not called to sit in tiny boats on little inland lakes in the serene beauty of summer days alone. We are called to be sailors on the terrible and glorious oceans of the world. And on those hard and sullen seas we may become no longer children but men. Nature is not always the friend of pleasure. It is the tremendous ally of character if we are strong enough to meet its stern demands.

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

And so, like Tennyson's Ulysses, we must once more go forth to the tempestuous sea. The ship is waiting. There is uncertainty. There is all the risk of great adventure. Perhaps Achilles, whom once we knew, awaits at the end of the voyage. Perhaps the happy isles shall open ports of welcome. Perhaps the great abyss shall swallow up the ship. The sea calls. The sails must be lifted. The great choice must be made. And once on the voyage uncertainty becomes assurance. Doubt turns to moral certainty. It is only those who take great risks who can keep believing in the happy isles.

But, after all, you cannot put all of this adventure into a classic reference, even when the genius of Tennyson has filled it with an added beauty. There is One who calls us to embark with him. And there is eternal peace in his eyes and eternal victory in his countenance as he calls. We are not afraid of the tempests if he is in the boat. And even in the storm ~~as~~ we sail with him ~~we~~ know that all is well.

## IV

### SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

“Consider the lilies . . . even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”  
—*Matthew* 6. 28, 29.

To begin with, Jesus himself had considered the lilies. Probably he was the only person in the world who was capable of seeing lilies at all. Everybody was capable of considering Solomon and all his glory. But the seeing of lilies with eyes which at all understood was quite another matter. The difference can be put simply. It needs to be put sharply. The lilies represented unconscious loveliness. Solomon and all his glory represented proud, self-conscious, glittering magnificence. The lilies represented grace and charm and ineffable sweetness existing in their own right, in happy simplicity, in complete and modest self-forgetfulness. Solomon represented a haughty desire to be impressive, to bend men's spirits by an overwhelming display of opulence and power.

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

It was the very apex of arrogant display. It has always been easy, perhaps inevitable, that men should appreciate and understand the glory of Solomon. Perhaps they were envious. But usually the thing they disliked was not the magnificence. They disliked the fate which had shut them out from a share in the regal show. So their lips applauded, and they were immensely impressed. The self-conscious glory of rank and power has captured men's imaginations in Babylon, in Nineveh, in Jerusalem, in Rome—indeed, in all the cities where power has clothed itself in regal panoply. Men have all the while been considering the glory of Solomon and trying to find a method by which they could secure a share in its splendors.

But the glory of the lilies is different enough. "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power," are left behind as one gazes at the simple, unconscious loveliness of the flowers. They are hopelessly democratic. They bloom for everybody. They do not even ask for eyes which see them and for hearts which love them. They have their own happy fulfillment in the shining symmetry of their petals, the friendly venture

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

of fragrance, and the pure, deep harmony of their own life. An ambitious young man anxious to get on in the world might easily feel he was wasting his time if he gave very much attention to lilies. The manners of the court would be supremely significant to him. Lilies are not likely to help you to win favor among the wily and self-conscious courtiers about a golden throne. But Jesus saw the lilies. And the glory of Solomon began to wither and fade when it was brought to the test which the lilies provided. Lilies have a way of forcing you to tell the truth if you look at them long. Perhaps it is well not to consider the lilies if you want to live in a gleaming tower of self-conscious pride.

No doubt Solomon has his place in the system of things. And no doubt that many-colored splendor which captured the imagination of the East and sent its flashing rays through the ways of three great religions had its contribution to make to the life of men. But Solomon and all his glory must always be a brightness before the eye and never a passion in the heart, if the heart is to be kept true and sound. Indeed, the difficulty regarding Solomon and all his glory

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

lies just in the fact that if you contemplate it too intently and too long, you quite lose your sense of the deep and real values, for you see the glittering splendor of Solomon through such media of human ambition and pride and consciousness of power that these things distort your vision. You become incapable of detecting what is really beautiful because you are not thinking most of all of beauty. You are thinking of rank and self-assertion and all the pageantry of human pride.

The wonderful thing about Jesus **■** we move back into his own life from the flashing penetration of his sentences regarding the lilies and Solomon lies just in the fact that he restored to men the direct gaze. He did not look at life through media of selfishness and ambition and pride, which distort the vision. He looked straight at beauty for the sake of beauty. Beauty lost nothing because it bloomed in some remote and sequestered spot. Beauty gained nothing because it gleamed above a throne. It was to be loved and understood for its own sake. And because he brought this direct gaze to the task of seeing, Jesus was able to find in lilies what

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

no one had found before. Perhaps he was really the first person in all the world actually to see a lily.

The principle probes very deeply. Everywhere there is the difference between the insight of the direct gaze and the failure of the distorted vision. If you go over the tale of English literature from Chaucer in the fourteenth century to Thomas Hardy in our own, you find an odd, zigzag movement. First there is a period of direct and glorious gazing upon beauty itself, and out of the experience arise gracious and golden words to tell the happy tale of it. So you have great writing luminous with haunting loveliness. Then men begin to look at the fine writing rather than at the beauty which inspired it. They begin to imitate phrases rather than to search for a fresh and vital experience of beauty itself. So writing becomes formal and stiff, and conventional cleverness is substituted for inspiration, formal correctness is put in the place of creative activity. By and by it all becomes so lifeless that in angry disgust some vital spirit goes on an eager quest for the direct experience, the deep and understanding contact,

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

which will restore reality to writing in an age of bright artifice. The quest is rewarded and once more words glow with primal freshness and with the power of life itself. Then the new masterpiece gets between men and the beauty which it describes. And so another period of artificiality comes on apace. The story of great writing is the story of the recovery of the direct gaze. It is the tale of men's turning from Solomon and all his glory to the lilies. It expresses itself in the difference between Pope and Wordsworth. On the one hand you will have the bright, hard glitter of clever society verse, on the other you will have the glory of life itself articulate in words which gleam and burn with authentic passion and abiding power.

Doubtless it was a matter of grave surprise to some Americans to wake one morning and find that Emily Dickinson had become famous with a strangely authentic fame as one of the few distinct and individual voices which have spoken in the New World. Here was a woman much of her life a recluse, writing with no thought of printing, living in a curiously intimate con-

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

tact with nature and life, and finding darting and whimsical words and sentences with their own bright wings to tell the tale of her thoughts and her insights. Perhaps to banish the public from one's thought is a very good way to find direct access to beauty. At all events, it becomes easier to estimate the glitter of Solomon's court at its true value, and to find the deathless loveliness of the lilies. For Emily Dickinson did achieve the direct gaze. And so the little volume of verses passed on to the world by friends who loved them has already found a place from which it will not be dislodged.

When one is traveling in the lake country in England, with all its changing mystery of hills and waters, he may amuse himself by reading comments written by travelers before this land had been made immortal in words which caught something of its own strange secret of quiet beauty. It appears that it was felt to be a terribly lonely, unfriendly country. One passed through it with a feeling of an alien in a hostile region, and one was glad to be free from its dark and austere silences. One can imagine scheming men of the court sensing a cold

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

loneliness as they looked out upon a landscape which seemed to rebuke petty human adroitness. You had an instinctive feeling that diplomacy could not make much of an impression upon these lonely hills. Then Wordsworth came and to his direct gaze the whole country was articulate, its quiet beauty was like a nun in adoration, its dancing flowers whispered secrets of the harmony which might blow like a breath of gladness through human hearts.

The story of the arts is seen in a new perspective as one remembers that some creations come from minds fixed upon the glory of Solomon, and others come from minds capable of seeing lilies. There are in cities old and new works of architecture whose consummate ugliness suggests a kind of perverted genius. How, we ask, could men have gotten the consent of their minds to perpetuate such atrocities? Then we remember that the passionate self-consciousness of the social leaders of any age can so pervert man's taste that the ugly seems to be the beautiful. When you look at many a building in Europe and America you know that the direct gaze was quite lost by the build-

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

ers. Some Solomon was prescribing the kind of glory he wanted, and the architect found that the golden reward strangely affected his eyes until he made the building as his patron liked it to look. The man who is content to do merely what the taste of the period dictates without a critical endeavor to discover what is really beautiful is sure to go wrong. So all too often good form slays good taste.

In painting, in sculpture, and in music there is the same story. The artist too much occupied with the glory of Solomon always misses the beauty of the lilies. So the poet laureate all too often writes conventional and lifeless verses while the uncrowned dreamer storms the castle of memory and puts his dauntless flag upon its highest tower.

The principles we are discussing are profoundly related to the daily practice of life. Perhaps here as much as anywhere one finds the tragedy of the eyes which are incapable of the sure and direct gaze. And it is usually some self-conscious glitter of Solomon's court which makes it impossible to see the lilies. Things small in themselves sometimes indicate a good deal. And without forget-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

ting Burke's caution that you cannot indict a nation, a certain experience possible in Britain may be taken for what it is worth. You are definitely impressed by the well-groomed Americans you see on the other side of the Atlantic. There is a neatness and finish about them which catches the eye. It is as if each of them had consulted the same tailor and had gone forth with noble docility to obey his behests. After you have gazed at many of these properly attired gentlemen you may chance to have a British peer pointed out to you as he walks briskly along some London street. And quite probably he will be wearing a coat which belongs to one suit, a waistcoat which belongs to another, and a pair of trousers which belongs to a third. There is no conventional connection between the three garments at all. But each expresses something the wearer likes and so he goes happily along his way.

Now, I do not want to use an illustration for more than it is worth, but, speaking theologically, I will confess that I find it difficult to avoid the conclusion that the man with the individual garments shows more signs of grace than the neatly obedient servant of

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

tailors far away. At least it is true that when we begin to see and value things for themselves and not at the dictates of formal convention, we are more likely to find real and satisfactory meanings. For all about us are those who are willing to make up our minds for us about our homes and our offices, our manners and our habits, and no doubt to give us appropriate remarks for every possible circumstance at any possible time. The code of some social Solomon is ready for our use if we will have it. Only we will miss the direct gaze. And we will miss the lilies.

It would seem that in respect of the houses where we dwell there may well be a declaration of independence. To decide how many pictures and what sort of pictures shall hang on a wall according to the mandate of a passing social fashion, to choose the color scheme of a room according to a season's whim, or an electric lamp according to this year's fashion, comes fairly near to the abdication of the rights of personality itself. For a house becomes a home only when the genuine life of its occupant is reflected in it. Only the direct gaze will enable men to create

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

homes which will give deep satisfaction to themselves and inspiration to their friends.

As we look deeply into the matter it becomes clear that Jesus himself found it necessary to fight battles and to win victories in order to be able to look upon lilies with seeing eyes. That direct gaze which was so great a gift from him to the world was won in moral and spiritual struggle. Israel was ready to give him opinions on every subject. Passing rumor of the careless brilliancy of Greece was ready to offer him many a persuasive opinion. Rome was ready to give him a solid body of interpretation of all sorts of relationships. How hard his battle was for the clear, straight eye perhaps we will never know. But we do know that Solomon and all his glory never made him incapable of seeing the lilies. We watch him after hot and passionate multitudes have pressed upon him until it seemed that their hectic mass mind will be almost too much for him. And when evening comes he goes away, climbing up to the heights of a mountain, and there all night in the lonely, glorious silence he recovers his hold upon his own soul, upon the meaning of life, upon

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES

that high, friendly fellowship which makes all things new.

The way out of most of our dilemmas will be found when we recover the capacity for the direct gaze, when we apprehend the full meaning of turning from Solomon to the lilies.

Do we find the foundations of ethical and social life swaying dizzily? Is it not because we have tested them by formulas instead of by a straight vision of life itself? Would not one long direct gaze at a little child with its mysterious, glorious, unconscious hopes and fears, its need of a home, where a father and a mother bring unwasted love and loyalty to each other and to the child—and all the frightful tragedy of a child's life when these things are absent—give us a whole code of sexual morals all shining with the insights of experience at a moment of sure illumination?

Do we seem at times to live in a world from which God has departed or even in a world where no God has ever been? Is it not because convention has gotten between us and that straight, clear vision which Jesus brought triumphantly from hours of passion-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

ate pain? When we recover the direct gaze will we not be seeing God in the garden, even while we gaze upon the lilies which he has planted there?

It is infinitely heartening to see Jesus, his eyes alight with intellectual vigor and vital energy, seeing the lilies and seeing God. And as we watch his face and listen to his words we come to apprehend that we too may win the capacity for the direct gaze. We too may become able to brush aside disturbing influences and see beauty and truth and goodness in their own right. We too may see the lilies. We too may feel the beating of the heart in whose hidden place lies the secret of the lilies' bloom.

## V

### THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM

“For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only *use* not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.”—*Galatians* 5. 13.

THERE are two ways of dealing with great sanctions. One is to think one's way through to their farthest significance, using every resource which a disciplined mind ripened and broadened by much reading and meditation can bring to the task, and then to express the result of one's thought in form as clear and lucid and luminous as is possible. The other is to live one's way through these sanctions, subjecting them at every step to the test of experience and struggle and all the heat and intensity of the personal life, and then to tell the tale of this experience in phrases which glow with the energy and passion of life itself. It was an essential characteristic of the apostle Paul

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

that he literally lived his way through every matter of which he wrote. The passion and the pain of his personal experience leave their mark upon every sentence. And if he was also a brilliant dialectician, with all the resources of a highly articulated mind, the thought was never a substitute for experience, but, rather, the form in which that experience was set forth and interpreted. Discriminating thought and vital experience met in a memorable sort of wedlock in this powerful apostle.

The battle for freedom was the central matter in the life of Paul. At white heat he discusses it in the Epistle to the Galatians. In a more measured and formal manner it dominates his thought in the Epistle to the Romans. It is not my purpose to-night to describe that great experience and the mighty dialectic which came out of it. If Doctor Parker were standing once more in this pulpit, with his singular power of seizing the very heart of great typical human experiences, with the sure, quick movement of his thought, and the dramatic and vivid power of his rhetoric, he might tell the great story in sentences all edged with light. I

## THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM

will content myself with a reference in lieu of a description. Paul belonged to that great company who have found that life was chaining them. His hands were bound. His mind was bound. His conscience was bound. And long before he was able to analyze or understand his own restlessness he was passionately longing for some great and satisfying experience of escape. To him Christianity was essentially an emancipation, and Jesus Christ was first of all the Great Emancipator. "With freedom did Christ make you free," he exulted, and he wrote to disciples whom he had won for the Invisible Master.

The fights for liberty stand among the supreme struggles of the race. Sometimes they have to do with political liberty and glow with the light of many a heroic charge and the patient courage of many a long campaign. Sometimes they have to do with moral and spiritual freedom, and tell the tale of the lonely human spirit struggling with the supreme matters of destiny. Sometimes they have to do with the freedom of the mind, and lead us to great libraries where, in bloodless conflict, daring scholars

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

and thinkers win the rights of the uncoerced intellect.

In all these fields we read the tale with glowing enthusiasm, and as we read we come to feel more and more the majesty of freedom. Mr. Coupland, in his graphic and understanding narrative of the life of Wilberforce, tells a story of one electric night in the House of Commons, when the patient and skillful leader was at last to see the fruition of his long-deferred hopes. His passion against the slave-trade had become the passion of England, and it was at last to crystallize into Parliamentary action. One speaker, at the climax of the evening, referred to Napoleon, who was then a prisoner at Saint Helena, and contrasted the fashion in which the great emperor, with his memories of bloodshed and the bitter tragedy which he had brought all over Europe, would seek his couch for slumber, and the glad consciousness of a new hope for numberless forlorn men and women who had no voice of their own, which Wilberforce would carry to his pillow that night. The rafters of the building echoed with such thunderous applause as had not been heard in the House

## THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM

of Commons for a generation, while Wilberforce sat with his face in his hands, the tears running down his cheeks. The men who make way for freedom do not always receive such public recognition, but they serve one of the supreme causes in all the world. "Ye were called for freedom," writes Paul to the Galatians. And, indeed, his whole career was a succession of campaigns for the moral and spiritual liberation of the human spirit.

The achievement of freedom, however, is not the end, but only the very beginning of the far journey. For freedom itself must be mastered by moral and spiritual passion or it may become a great enemy instead of a powerful friend. Indeed, by a strange paradox you have no more than come to realize the majesty of freedom until you must face its possible menace. Once and again Paul found that the new freedom was being prostituted and becoming an ugly license. Dark vices crept in under its name. A poisonous serpent coiled in the very garden where its fairest flowers grew. Paul was never more sternly in earnest than when he wrote, "*Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh.*" I must not take time

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

to-night for a detailed exposition of Paul's use of the word "flesh" with a very definite meaning. We all know that the flesh and the whole material world can be so shot through with moral and spiritual meaning that they have a noble sacramental value. On the other hand the flesh and, indeed, every material aspect of life may be untouched by moral sanctions or by spiritual beauty. Indeed, they may be the vehicle of all which is directly opposed to moral and spiritual values. Seen so, the flesh becomes the very symbol of all that is dark and evil. And so Paul often uses the word. The freedom which surrenders to the impulse which has never felt the control of a moral ideal soon becomes a completely disintegrating and destructive thing. The most terrible prostitution of liberty is that which confuses it with license. If freedom means only the surrender to every lawless passion, it is on the road to the most intolerable sort of slavery. And yet this is just the mistake which lovers of liberty seem to find it hardest to avoid. It haunts the ways of men in every age. The old vices are always appearing in the garments of new liberties. The con-

## THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM

temptation of this sad dénouement of fair hopes of freedom in many a century has taught the surest and deepest thinkers the menace of that very liberty which they love. And no man understood this aspect of the difficult and baffling problem more thoroughly than the apostle Paul.

The sense of the menace of freedom has led many men to distrust democracy. Alexander Hamilton and his circle really feared the people. They had no faith in the popular mind. They suspected its activities. They believed that by subtle intrigue it must be guided. They desired the new republic to be a government "of gentlemen, by gentlemen, for the people." They did not understand that the very genius of a true liberty is to train and develop common men so that they shall be capable of making great decisions and bearing the burden of great responsibilities.

Freedom must be given a framework of stability if either the individual or the nation is to be safe. A profound study of the problem is made in what I think may be called the most notable piece of critical thinking which has been published in the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

United States of America in the last quarter of a century. Professor Irving Babbitt, of Harvard University, has brought a wealth of erudition and an extraordinary capacity for clear thinking and trenchant expression to the writing of *Rousseau and Romanticism*. He sees clearly enough the tragedy of impulses controlled by no strong, sure standards. He also sees the dull and bleak rigidity of a life where mechanical standards control everything, and there is no bright, clear movement of creative energy. He turns from an "élan vital," which is really the apotheosis of uncontrolled feeling. And in the place of the hard and lifeless standards which might seem to be the alternative, he places that "frein vital," that vital control in which standards themselves become warm and glowing and rich with all the energy of a great vitality. He seeks the path where liberty itself is law made glorious, where great and inviolable standards are set to the music of a noble passion. And so he finds the way of creative and productive strength for the modern man.

Paul the apostle knew the solution of the problem very many centuries ago. He is

## THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM

not content with his praise of freedom. He was not content with his condemnation of license. In one tremendous sentence he sets forth his solution of the problem. And we must literally translate his words. They are these: "Be enslaved to each other in love." Let us hold the whole paradox—so like ■ Chesterton before the days of Chesterton—in our minds. Paul says in effect: "You are called in order that you may be free. And the way to be free is to be the slaves of love." Here we come upon something more than the stabilization of freedom. Here we come upon the transfiguration of freedom. You watch a mother as the late night moves on toward the early morning bending over ■ child whose life seems to be ebbing with the passing night. She is doing battle with the very forces of death. She is a veritable slave to the tiny child for whose life she is contending. Does she feel a sullen anger that she must spend such tense and terrible hours bending over the suffering babe? How she would scorn the thought! The slavery of love is perfect freedom. Here is a man who suddenly comes upon the opportunity of making ■ great sacrifice for a

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

friend to whom he has been deeply devoted for many years with no adequate opportunity to express that devotion. He spends himself for his friend with a kind of eager joy. The sacrifice is not sacrifice. It is joyful singing. Love has changed an intolerable burden into a happy privilege. To do a thing because you must with a sense of hard coercion in the doing is always a bitter experience. But to do a thing because you love to do it puts a heart of freedom and gladness into the most painful service.

There is such a thing as the deliberate and impassioned slavery of truth. Witness Charles Darwin with infinite patience collecting and classifying data over a score of years. There is such a thing as the deliberate and impassioned slavery to goodness. Witness the lyrical self-sacrifice of Saint Francis. There is such a thing as the deliberate and impassioned slavery to Jesus Christ. Witness the life of joyous and devoted daring of Saint Paul himself. And in such impassioned and determined slavery to truth and goodness and the God whose face they have seen in the face of Christ men have found the most actual freedom. The

## THE MASTERY OF FREEDOM

slavery of willing devotion is the very emancipation of the personal life. Confronting all social problems Paul would still say, "Be ye enslaved to each other in love." For this sentence is not merely a formula. It is the description of a certain sort of activity based upon a very definite kind of experience. If we learn to love men as we see them loved in the heart of Christ, all social relations will be changed. And the essential meaning of the change will be this: Liberty itself, when the expression of moral love upholds all noble sanctions at the very moment when it sets men free. The permanent moral mastery of freedom is to be found only in that ethical love whose secret we learn from Jesus Christ.

## VI

### WE NEEDS MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

“Making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth.”

—*Ephesians* 1. 9-10.

ONE of the most baffling and arresting facts of life is the presence and powerful influence of that series of human experiences which we call passions. While they last they are intense and electric with energy. And while they are in command of our feelings they seem authentic enough even when they are evil and destructive in character. In the quiet of the day before or in the regret of the day after a man may see clearly that there is bitter disillusion in a moment of hectic passion. But the moment itself carries a kind of hot and exultant sense of justification. When people lose their tempers

## WE MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

and say the most unbelievably wicked and ugly things, the words themselves are spoken with an odd and triumphant sense that they are very sane and quite demanded by the occasion. I wish it were possible to say that bad passions are always transient and that the very characteristic of good passions is their power to command a permanent loyalty. I am afraid, however, that this is not quite true. From boyhood until old age a man may be held increasingly in the clutches of that cold and bitter passion of avarice. His whole personality shrinks and loses its rich human warmth. But this sordid bitter passion remains and grows. The test, however, is really a simple one. And I am afraid it is rather more easy to make the distinction than most of us are willing to admit. Any passion which in its whole expression tends to enrich and enlarge the lives of the people among whom we live, which leaves no torn and broken lives in the wake of its hot activity, which leaves our own lives hearty and human and full of the power of noble self-sacrifice, is sure to be a good passion. And it is by good passions that the world is kept alive. It is a wise

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

word which says, "No life is safe that is not passionate." But more than that, passion is creative activity. All the great and stirring and enriching movements have passion at the heart of them.

Many men have known some hour of passionate apprehension which has changed all the world for them. Light has become white heat. Knowledge has become flaming devotion. And what was a process of reasoning has become one with the very beating of the human heart. There are men who have ideas which are cold and unkindled. They command our respect, but they do not win our joyous allegiance. There are men who have emotions untamed and impetuous. They make us feel the allurements of unbridled emotion, but they do not give us stable and dependable leadership. Two years ago I visited the lovely city of Geneva, and on my first evening sat at the window of my hotel watching the great white head and shoulders of Mont Blanc fade into darkness as day waned into night. There are two men about whom one is likely to think at such a time. One is Rousseau, to whom the city of Geneva gave a birthplace. He was the apostle of

## WE MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

■ passion which felt no disciplining hand upon it. He was the interpreter of expansive emotion. On the other hand, at Geneva, of course, we must think of Calvin. He too was a man of passion. But it was passion which was the very expression of discipline and was not a substitute for it. And the powerful mind of Calvin gave a framework of great solidity and strength to all that commanded his heart. With all the good things which may be said about Rousseau and with all the aspects of the life of Calvin which we would like to change, it still remains true that the passion which is merely expansive emotion is a disintegrating force in the life of the world, and the passion which has noble discipline at the heart of it and need not fear the tests of clear, cool thought is itself ■ creative power for the upbuilding of human life and all of its nobly productive institutions.

Paul was ■ man who was sure to find a master passion. He was sure also to understand the meaning of discipline. And his highly trained mind worked with clear and unhesitating movement through all the elements of his experience. It was on the road

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

to Damascus that he found his ruling passion. He had been unable to organize the forces of his own life into any sort of unity or coherence or harmony. It was by means of a contact with the luminous personality of Jesus Christ that he found just that creative passion which bent every energy of his life to its great purposes. Self-conscious discipline became hearty and joyous devotion to Jesus Christ his Saviour and Lord and Master. More than Rousseau, in his later century, was able to find in the release of all the emotional richness of his life to undisciplined expression Paul found in ■ disciplined devotion where discipline itself took wings and obedience became the most joyous freedom.

But the astonishing thing about Paul—if I may put it in such a daring fashion—and, indeed, the permanently significant thing about Paul, is just that he never outgrew his relation to the creative personality of Jesus. Paul was all the while moving forward, but his Master always went before. He was all the while exploring new territories of thought and feeling and experience, but his Leader knew and interpreted every

## WE MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

territory which he entered. We must admit that Paul was in the sensitiveness and daring of his emotional life one of the half-dozen outstanding men who have appeared among us. But all the unfolding quality of the life of this man of supreme capacity for passion was satisfied in the increasing amplitude of what Jesus Christ meant to him and of the worlds of experience into which he led him. We all know what it is to outgrow books and to outgrow ideas. There is something wonderfully arresting about this spectacle of a man of supreme emotional gifts who found a passion which grew with the growing of his life to the very end.

You have at least a suggestion of what this passion meant in its maturity in the words which we have used as a text this morning. Paul began with Jesus, as it is so right and wise that all men should begin, at the point of personal experience. But the relation moved on and on. Paul was a part of a material world. He was part of a social world. He was part of a vast world of moral and spiritual realities. And so, indeed, are we all. As the years went on he related his mighty Master with more and

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

more firmness and understanding to all of these worlds. He saw the very creation groaning for that which came to light in Jesus. We do not know that he ever read Aristotle, but the doctrine of a final cause became a very central part of his message and, indeed, a central matter in his own experience.

He came to see in the whole movement of created things and of life an implicit purpose which involved at last the gathering together of everything and every personality under the lordship and leadership and mastery of Jesus Christ, "unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth." This, then, was Paul's ultimate passion. Beginning with a personality whose secret Jesus possessed, he ended with a universe whose secret was held in the same great hand. And to him the whole meaning of the life of the world was its moving toward that mighty consummation.

When in such fashion one has seen the meaning of the unfolding and enlarging of the outlook and the passion of Paul, there

## WE MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

comes a sudden sense of almost wistful sympathy and sadness. With such a mind and with such an attitude what use he would have made of the materials which science has brought within our reach in the last seventy-five years! Not with vague timidity would he have approached the task, writing hesitating and apologetic words about the harmonizing of science and religion, but with the stride of a conqueror he would have claimed everything in biology and psychology and, indeed, in every field as a part of the territory belonging to his Master. With a great gesture, expressing the right of eminent domain, he would have claimed everything for Jesus Christ.

Is this not the inevitable and assured line for Christian thought? And is it not in this fashion that our own Christian passion is to maintain its unflagging power? Let us look for a moment upon the illumination which at once begins to fall upon the world when we see it in the light of Paul's principle of the great consummation of summing everything up in the unity which comes from the Mastery of Christ.

Let us go back to that far distant day

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

when there ~~was~~ no life on land and all life was in the water. Let us watch the first venturesome movements of vegetation to secure a foothold upon the land. Let us watch animal forms as they follow. What does it all mean? It means that God is at work. That divine spark of discontent he has put into the biological process. Life is moving forward. It is getting ready for something yet to come. By and by eyes with the light of reason look out upon the world. It means that God is preparing for some great event. By and by faces drawn with the sense of moral passion and the power of spiritual fellowship appear. It means that, through the coming of mental acumen and moral perception and spiritual understanding, God is preparing a world where Jesus Christ can come. Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, did not put it too strongly when he said that Jesus Christ is the goal of the evolutionary process. This does not mean that the process produces him. It does mean that the God of the process and the God whom Christ reveals are one.

But the biological process itself reveals strange kinships with life's deeper moral and

## WE MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

spiritual meanings. For if there is a great forward movement, that movement is not always accepted. There is a movement of degeneration as well as a movement of evolution. When forms have failed to go forward with the process they have become extinct. The world is a vast graveyard of degenerate types which in effect made the great refusal. And when rationality emerges and a moral ideal appears the free spirit stands at the very point where evolution moves forward and degeneracy moves backward. This is the moment of choice, and with its consequences century after century you have the whole Pauline theology fastened in the biological process itself, for when full self-consciousness arrives it is always true, as it has been implicitly true before, that "life's business is just the terrible choice."

Paul's principle of judging everything in the light of the divine purpose, of summing up everything at last in Christ, has very important relations to the whole matter of the subtle and baffling problem of sex. The Freudians have taught us many things in these matters and, while the study of the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

abnormal has not been just the happiest fashion in which to come to understand the normal, we do have areas of knowledge which they have greatly enlarged. There are times when the contemporary tendency to connect nearly everything in some fashion with sex seems to be full of menace. Doubtless the tendency has gone too far and will be corrected by later investigations, but at the center everything depends upon one's insight. If you think that because a thing has lowly connections it must be low, you can get into no end of trouble; but if you judge the whole process by its outcome at its highest, and not by its lowly beginnings, everything is changed. It is not strange that all sorts of lovely and spiritual things should have their connections with the mysterious process by which life is constantly renewed in the world. It only means that the physical is on the way to the moral and the spiritual. And the physical must be judged at last by its final purpose. It is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end; and the end of the whole world-wide process is a human race capable of appreciating and of following Jesus. You can never understand

## WE MUST LOVE THE HIGHEST

sex until you see its outcome in moral character. And you can never fully understand moral and spiritual character until you see their flower in the personality of Jesus Christ. Not the lowly beginnings but the moral and spiritual consummation is to give us our standard of values. Not that the spiritual life has subtle connections with the sexual impulse merely, but that that impulse moves forward and upward until it reaches the level of moral and spiritual manhood. You can never judge anything until you see what can be made of it by the grace of Christ.

New knowledge, then, is always the happiest and most inspiring sort of thing to a mind like that of Paul, for new knowledge means new territory over which Christ is to reign. The very meaning of experience for the Christian who has caught Paul's vision lies in the fact that all the while new areas of mind and heart and conscience and will are being occupied by the triumphant Christ. Nothing in heaven or earth or past or present or future belongs to a realm which is foreign to his sway. The meaning of the Christian life ■ of the biological process is

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

to be found in the constant emergence of new and higher meanings to which we must give unhesitating loyalty. And the central matter may be expressed in those words of Guinevere which we have taken ■■ a subject for this morning: "We needs must love the highest when we see it, not Launcelot nor another." So life's passion grows from strength to strength, from goodness to greater goodness, from beauty to beauty of subtler loveliness, from moral and spiritual hopes to moral and spiritual fruitions. And every stage of the process is ■ stage in the universal victory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## VII

### ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE

"Abraham . . . went out, not knowing whither he went."—*Hebrews* 11. 8.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem . . ."

—*Psalms* 137. 5.

ALL great living is in part daring adventure. All cumulative living is in part loyal memory and the hoarding of experience. The very genius of the Hebrew people is found in the words, "Abraham . . . went out, not knowing whither he went." The history of Israel was one long moral and spiritual adventure. It was lonely climbers among dangerous peaks who first dared to believe in a God with a character. If, as a distinguished British scholar used to say, the great achievement of the Old Testament is just in pronouncing the word "righteousness," that itself is a vast and far-reaching adventure of the human spirit. To make one country a holy land in a fashion which ultimately makes every land holy involves

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

a series of adventures of the body, the mind, and the conscience of a whole people. To take the crude ore of the Babylonian Creation and Flood stories, to put it through the mint of the spiritual life of a nation mightily aware of God, and to bring it forth a part of the coinage of ethical religion, is an adventure the very thought of which kindles the imagination. When, after the experience on the Damascus road, Paul went out not knowing whither he went, he was more, rather than less, a son of Abraham than before. Moral and spiritual adventure was in his blood.

But the Jew could remember as well as explore. In the midst of a brilliant and alien culture in the days of the exile he remembered the little hill city of his birth. He remembered it as a particular spot of earth. He remembered it as an idea. He remembered it as an ideal. And with poignant joyous pain in the memory he cried, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!" He did not forget. He has never forgotten. He carried into all his vast and varied experiences about the earth the memory of the little city in the hills, the whole quality of its life, the mean-

## ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE

ing of its story. He gathered up the whole experience of his past to carry on with him into the future. And so at its best Israel lived at the very point where experience and adventure met. And when Jesus came he felt that he was the fulfillment of the whole past of Israel at the very moment when he completely transcended its meaning. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets. Yet the fulfillment itself was a new and amazing adventure.

Sometimes men are tempted to build their lives and their institutions exclusively upon the firm foundations of experience. They want to build a castle and not an airship. They are thinking of solidity and firmness and not of variety and change. Walls covered with ivy appeal to them more than whirring wheels of a machine soon to sweep away from the earth with a kind of imperial disdain. A cliff against which the storms beat in vain captures their imagination. Even when they think of some powerful bird battling with storms upon far heights, they remember that somewhere among the rocky cliffs it has a sheltered nest. That civilization owes a great debt to the home-builder

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

as well as to the pioneer can scarcely be denied. And the home-builder is the conscience of the funded experiences of the race.

When in the sixth century before the Christian era that capable and clear and wise thinker Confucius put at the very center of the life of his people the requirement of loyalty to all the noble and gracious ways of the past, he was but finding the fullest place for the expression of the attitude represented by the words, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem." He was expressing the mood of that large group of men who feel that to maintain is much more important than to obtain. When quiet monks in the monasteries of the Middle Ages patiently copied ancient manuscripts, determined that the ripe wisdom of their older world should not be allowed to perish, they were taking their position with those who believe that there is something sacred, indeed something priceless, about experience. When Peter Lombard gathered into the "Sentences" the carefully garnered thought of the church for over a thousand years, he was making accessible to young men of the twelfth century that experience which was the best gift of

## ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE

the long and many-lighted story of the church. When Dean Inge, in that vitally significant little book, *The Platonic Tradition*, finds a stream of creative idealism flowing through the church's life and giving to it a noble continuity, he is coming to the problems of a new day with a priceless insight of experience.

But the apostle of loyalty to the experience of the past is not always a true servant of men. Sometimes experience provides a safe and beautiful home. But sometimes it builds a prison with remorseless chains. And when the man who lives in the prison comes to be so familiar with its stern walls that he calls a prison a home, and when he comes to regard even the chains with affection, so that he is ready to treat as his foe any man who comes as a deliverer, you have indeed a strange and baffling situation. When Amos made religion one with righteousness and scorned the religious rites which did not develop character, he found that many of his contemporaries loved their chains and did not want a deliverer. When Paul, with a whole world in his mind and his heart, turned from the provincial and narrow sanc-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

tions of the old religion, he found that multitudes of his race regarded him not as an emancipator but rather as a traitor. They loved their chains. When Luther brushed aside every sanction which stood between his spirit and direct contact with the living God, he discovered that many men found support in what he regarded as a prison. They loved their chains. When the prophets who saw the social implications of Christianity began to subject to remorseless analysis the men who never allowed their Christian principles to invade their business, it was soon discovered that many people resented the prophetic voices. They loved their chains. And so the love of old ways and the trust in the guidance of experience sometimes becomes the foe and not the friend of man. When humanity falls in love with its past, its future is endangered.

If it is true that we all love a lover, it is also true that something in us all loves an adventurer. "We are the first that ever burst into this narrow sea," speaks to the viking in us all. It was when "behind him lay the gray Azores, behind the gates of Hercules," and "before him only shoreless

## ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE

seas," that Columbus became one of the world's heroes. Archimedes in the bath at Syracuse stirs our imagination because he actually sails a little boat of intellectual adventure in a bathtub out to new lands of knowledge. He finds that the shores of a bathtub may, indeed, be the shores of a new world. When Plato, finding the existing world so far from mind and heart's desire, projects his faith into that world of golden reality which is the source and hope of all that is best in this world, we breathe a deep sigh of glad content. In a great crisis of thought he was not afraid to set sail. He went out not knowing whither he went. When in the thirteenth century Roger Bacon made the cell of a monk big enough for a new science, when he set out on the adventure of observation which, as other men joined in the adventure, was to change the face of the world and the faith of humanity, he did something which still kindles our minds and warms our hearts. He was not afraid to set sail. He went out not knowing whither he went. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and in effect declared that democratic dreams

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

are such stuff as states are made of, he gave the note of a brave adventure to the very republic which he was helping to found. When Charles Darwin crowned twenty years of observation and close study of facts gathered all about the world with the explanation projected in *The Origin of Species*, he literally turned the stream of human thought toward new and mighty seas. He was not afraid to set sail. He went out not knowing whither he went.

The debt we owe to the adventurer is one we can never pay. He has given us new horizons. He has turned our eyes to light never before seen on sea or land. He has poured new worlds into the laps of the astonished recipients of his bounty.

But that is not the whole of the story. For sometimes the adventurer is a pirate and not a lawful sailor upon the high seas. Sometimes he is an audacious Icarus whose fall is as tragic as his flight was amazing. Sometimes, drunk with emotions, he quite loses the capacity to distinguish between intoxicants and food. When that gifted but unscrupulous Greek who had sat at the feet of Socrates wasted the military strength of

## ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE

Athens and then turned traitor, he taught the city the menace of the adventurer who has brilliancy without character. In a very unhappy sense, following him, Athens went out not knowing whither it went. When that strange emperor in whom brutality and a diseased sense of beauty so curiously combined set Rome burning and made music to accompany its flames, the imperial city learned the meaning of a lawless experimenting in adventure full of disorder and suffering. With such a ruler, in a bitter fashion Rome went out not knowing whither it went. When lawless iconoclasts to whose heads the Reformation had gone like strong wine began to tear down the solid sanctions of clean and noble living, men learned the meaning of an adventure which lost more than it could ever gain. When Nietzsche sought to build up a culture whose very foundations were laid upon the ruins of the noblest sanctions of the life of Europe for two thousand years, Western civilization confronted the challenge of an adventure completely destructive, and the men who tried to be blonde giants, whose undisciplined will was the law of the world, in a

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

fashion with its own far-flung tragedy, went out not knowing whither they went. When that marvelous ship Adventure comes sweeping into view you must watch for its flag. For sometimes it is a black emblem with skull and crossbones. And sometimes it is the flag of civilization itself.

That way of thought and feeling and action which, climbing through the pages of the Old Testament, comes at last to the heights of the New, has many aspects of summoning authority and inspiration. And one of the most fruitful observations which can be made regarding its meaning is just that perpetually it has to do with the meeting of experience and adventure in fruitful and noble wedlock. Out of empire building and exile, out of political dependence and contact with people of many lands there are gathered those insights into the meaning of God and the relationships of men which with some vast and divine impulse from within become the glorious Old Testament revelation. And Paul, with the wide experience of the Roman Empire as a frame, builds his towering thought of the kingdom of God among men. The very genius of the

## ADVENTURE AND EXPERIENCE

inspiration which comes from Jesus is a union of moral conservation and spiritual adventure. The two live together in the far-ranging thinking of Saint Augustine. They bloom upon one stock in the obedience and the daring of Saint Francis. They are one in that consummate intellectual product of the Middle Ages, the "Summa" of Saint Thomas. The great reformers soon learn that only as experience and adventure combine will their work endure. Then the mysticism of the seventeenth century is at its best when it clasps hands with history and at its worst when it forgets the lessons of experience. The Mayflower in its turn is notable just because in it adventure and moral experience travel together toward the new world. And the great revival of the eighteenth century is gladly receiving treasures inherited from the past at the very moment when it goes on to make a new future.

At the beginning of another year memories and expectations come crowding in upon us. The whole wonder and the whole productive quality of the past speak to us and we reply, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!" The days before us beckon. The

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

untried and the unknown lift their voices. We feel that we would like to join the company of those whom "only the farthest beacon beckons." And at the great divide between the past and the future stands the Master with all the treasure of ancient good and all the hope of the untried days in his hands. We too will go out not knowing whither we go. But we will travel with high assurance ■■ we follow him.

## VIII

### THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN

“Behold, the sower went forth to sow.”

—*Matthew* 13. 3.

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.”—*Matthew* 13. 33.

WE are all the while being astonished by the comprehensiveness of the mind of Jesus. Other teachers seized brilliant and precious fragments of the truth. He brought the fragments together into completeness and unity. Even civilizations were built about noble but incomplete sanctions. He brought together the varied insights and inspirations and created a great organism of truth whose very fullness and richness baffle our smaller minds. Confucius had looked to the past. Heraclitus looked to the future. Jesus brought the best of the past to the golden and creative moment when the future was to be made. The Hebrews were perpetually facing the problem of moral decay. The

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

Greeks were all the while facing the problem of mental darkness. Jesus brought the two aspects of life together. "Ye are the salt of the earth," he said, speaking in the Hebrew spirit. "Ye are the light of the world," he said, capturing the very genius of the Greek.

When once we have come to understand this synthetic habit of the mind of Jesus we begin to watch for his skillful joining of things which had existed apart and often in antagonism. We begin to sense the meaning of his work as the great Harmonizer.

Our own times witness a curious and startling change in the thinking of the Christian world itself. It is a change which, speaking not too closely and yet not too inaccurately, we may characterize as the division between the Anglo-Saxon and the European mind in the interpretation of the Christian faith. Since the days of Maurice and Kingsley in Great Britain the social interpretation of the religion which Jesus founded has become a part, and a very essential and dominating part, of the Christian hope. In the United States of America since the days of Josiah Strong and Professor Rauschenbusch very

## THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN

much the same thing has happened. The social passion is for many of our best young leaders almost synonymous with the Christian passion. The finding of the will of Jesus for all of our social relations is an alluring and mastering part of the Christian quest. Social regeneration has become a blazing ideal of the Christian faith. Taking all the influences and activities together, we may say that the belief that the action of the gospel involves a new society has become a cardinal element in the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of the Christian faith.

Broadly speaking, the situation in Europe is very different. Here, in spite of the bitter cataclysm of the war, Germany still maintains a certain very powerful leadership, a brilliant and masterful capacity to set the pace. In the days of Albrecht Ritschl it seemed that the interpretation of Christianity from the standpoint of the kingdom of God might lead to a far-reaching and dominant social emphasis. But the tendency toward an emphasis on the inner life inherent in Lutheranism, and perhaps the sense that one must sometimes do as a citizen what one could not approve as a churchman,

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

worked powerfully in German thought. The bitterness and disillusionment following the Great War greatly strengthened these tendencies. A defeated nation always turns to the inner life and builds there an invisible temple of reality to compensate for its sense of loss in the realm of external relations. The southern part of the United States has been in this sense the most religious part of the republic since the days of the Civil War. If the objective world is against you, it is still possible to reign in unsubdued splendor over the gracious beauties of the Kingdom within. Disillusionment with the objective drives men to go deeply and eagerly to subjective experiences. All this is likely to result in a new and gracious perception of all the wonder of the inner life. It is the defeated man and the defeated nation for whom it is easiest to say, "Good-by, proud world, I'm going home." In any event the whole Teutonic emphasis in its most characteristic expression has come to rest upon a profound and convinced retreat into the realm of the inner life. Christianity is not thought of as a transformed society. It is thought of as an individual soul which, after

## THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN

tragic and baffled flight, finds at last a nest for itself in the heart of God. In a sense all this carries with it a very powerful feeling that the nations who believe in a transformation of society through the power of Christ are almost unbelievably young. They are like bright and clean-faced lads in white flannels who, after tennis and bath, sit down in the shade of a summer's day to work out a program for mankind with an almost delightful ignorance of the unspeakable difficulties in the way of the utopia of which they dream. To the typical German the Anglo-Saxon view of a transformed society is not so much wrong as quite evidently a product of the workings of an early adolescent mind. You may smile in a fatherly way at such fair and unsubstantial dreams. But you must not dream of taking them seriously. Quite obviously such wholesale regeneration of humanity in all its relations cannot take place in this æon. And it is important to remember that this is not merely a Teutonic view. Many of the young intellectuals in the Christian Church in other countries share it. There is a sense all over Europe that the Anglo-Saxon mind has

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

never grown up. It is all the while playing with gracious phrases and ignoring stark and terrible realities.

All this was very clearly evident at the recent Conference on Life and Work in the beautiful Swedish city of Stockholm. Once and again Anglo-Saxon delegates were shocked and bewildered by the refusal, especially of the Teutonic group, to accede in assumptions which seemed to them a part of the very foundation of the structure of the Christian religion. The gospel was a mighty inner experience to these delegates from Central Europe. With great intellectual acumen, with noble spiritual fervor, and with a moral passion of their own they expounded the creed of the Christian Temple in the heart of man. And there they halted. Too bitter, too wise, too terribly honest to consider what they believed to be impossible, they refused to accept the watchwords of the social gospel. And to them many of the addresses of Anglo-Saxon delegates must have seemed utterances based upon a foundation of the most shallow and superficial optimism. One can fancy some of them going to their rooms at night and saying, bit-

## THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN

terly: "Have these British and American Christians never at all understood the meaning of the words, 'Out of the depths I have cried unto thee'?" For themselves they refused the wax which would fasten upon them the wings of Icarus. Only disaster would come from the use of those wings. For in the awful heat of life the wax would melt.

On the other hand the keenest and the wisest of the British and American group, those most profoundly aware of life's passion and pain, and yet most indomitably cherishing the unfaltering hope, would have declared that if Christianity is to maintain any sort of moral integrity, any sort of spiritual validity, it must not refuse to attempt the social task. A Christianity which does not undertake to transform society after the fashion of the mind of Christ cannot maintain permanently its own vitality, cannot perpetually feel the play of the fountains of moral and spiritual energy in the heart of the individual. You cannot keep the heart of a crusader if you refuse to go on the great crusades. And if you do not accomplish everything, if your dream eludes and passes

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

beyond you, still you do accomplish something, and at least you live and work in the light of a full ideal of what Christianity ought to accomplish in society. "I believe in Christianity," said Tertullian, "because it is impossible."

In the light of this deep and almost tragic cleavage in the minds of modern Christians as to the very nature of the Christian task, can we do better than to go back to the mind of Jesus and as we pass through the corridors of his spacious and cleansing thought to discover what we may learn regarding these difficult and perplexing matters?

Very quickly we find with what definiteness he sounds the note of the gospel as a message to the individual. Sitting by the seaside and lifting his eyes to behold the work of a farmer in the fields near by, we hear him say: "Behold, the sower went forth to sow." And as he tells that great and memorable story of the kinds of ground we listen with kindled minds and quickened hearts. A little later he explains the story to his nearest friends, and every emphasis is clearly and sharply individual. He is not thinking of states. He is not thinking of

## THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN

churches. He is not thinking of society. He is thinking of the individual heart in which the seed of the gospel is sown and of the responsiveness of the soil which that heart offers to the message. It is clear then that in the most vivid perspective Jesus saw the meaning of the individual life and its relation to the gospel. He knew how to concentrate all the rays of heavenly light to meet the need of the individual soul.

But the same voice which spoke of the sower and the seed he placed in the individual heart also gave forth the glowing and seminal saying about the leaven. Let us listen once more to the words: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened." Here quite clearly Jesus is not speaking of the individual person. He is not speaking of the lonely dignity of the isolated human spirit. He is speaking of a state—a kingdom. He is speaking of a society—the society of the kingdom of God. The restless, vital yeast of the new life is to permeate society. It is not a new law to be introduced from without. It is a new principle, to be made po-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

tent by its vital action from within. The very genius of society is to be transformed by the working of the new life which Jesus has brought to the world. All human relations are to be transformed. A kingdom permeated by the yeast of the gospel can only be a kingdom whose international relations, whose wide and energetic trade, whose industrial and economic and social relations, are all brought to submission and glad allegiance to Jesus Christ. Society is to know the salvation which first of all is offered to the individual life.

It is clear, then, that confronted by the dilemma of the individual and social interpretations of the gospel, Jesus will not say "Either—or." He will say "both." To be sure, many of his followers will declare, "The gospel is not a leaven to transform society; it is a seed planted in the individual soul." And many of his followers will declare, "The gospel is not a seed growing at last in the isolated garden of the individual soul; it is a mighty leaven to remake the whole social fabric." But no authority for this cleavage can be found in the teachings of Jesus. To those who say, "The gospel is a seed," he

## THE SEED AND THE LEAVEN

declares, "And also a leaven." And to those who say, "The gospel is a leaven," he declares, "And also a seed."

The way out of our modern dilemma, then, is to accept and utilize the truth in each position and to combine them in the unity of a noble harmony.

The gospel is a seed. It is a mighty force transforming the individual life. It is an energy remaking the individual spirit and all its relations. It is a glorious temple in the heart of man.

And here we can gladly welcome all the gracious insights, all the brilliant and far-reaching dialectic of the inner life, coming from the understanding mystics of all ages and from the Christian thinkers of Europe to-day. Here we have a platform on which we can stand in days of social disillusionment and disappointment. "My mind to Christ a kingdom is," is an authentic and perpetual Christian note.

The gospel is also a leaven permeating and transforming society. And every Christian has a responsibility for the working of this leaven. The renewal of society is a task which the Christian Church cannot evade or

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

avoid. Work and play, commerce and statecraft, all the great activities of masses of men, of institutions and nations, are to feel the touch of the royal hand of Christ. The very vastness of it all, the astonishing range and depth and height of it, call us on. Here is work great enough for God. It is only when we forget the power of the living Christ that a redeemed society seems impossible. It is only when the leaven is inoperative that we think it is impotent.

“Seed and leaven,” we will say then, not “seed or leaven.” We will claim for ourselves a share in the comprehensiveness of the mind of Christ. To be glad in the truth each man sees, and to supplement it by the truth which has not yet come above his horizon, to be glad in the truth each group and each nation sees, and to supplement these fragmentary insights, is the very genius of the Christian religion. In such fashion as this shall the Anglo-Saxon meet the European, and Christianity shall “make one music as before, but vaster.”

## IX

### FELLOWSHIP

"If we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another."—1 *John* 1-7.

GOING over in the Greek the sentence from which these words are taken, one has the fascinating experience which comes once and again to the reader of the rare old Attic speech. Particular words stand forth dripping with associations which have their own historic charm and literary allurements. When we read the Greek word for "walk" we see at once that it is the same word which gave to the School of Aristotle its name, "Peripatetic." And quickly we picture the students following the great master as he walked in the Lyceum, drinking in his words, and hiding them away in their minds to remain forever. If we walk in the light of the mind of the greatest Teacher of all as the disciples of Aristotle walked with him, we shall become members of a nobler School of Peripatetics whose fellowship will be ra-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

diant and permanent and fruitful. Then in the same sentence we are told that the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin, and the word for "cleanse" is the same word in its root ■ "katharis," which in the criticism of Aristotle expresses that purification, that cleansing of the emotions which is the great function of tragic art. In ■ profounder sense than any tragedy can accomplish, the vast vital self-giving of the cross is to search man's mind, his conscience and his heart, releasing vast forces of cleansing. And so a life morally and spiritually renewed is to become capable of lasting and productive fellowship.

The matter of men's living together wisely and happily has concerned the thought of some of the shrewdest and some of the keenest of minds. Francis Bacon put his sharp-edged wisdom into the suggestion, couched in epigrammatic form, that we should treat our friends as if they may some time become enemies, and we should treat our enemies as if they may some time become our friends. There is something graciously noble about the conception of all enemies ■ possible friends. But there is something carrying ■

## FELLOWSHIP

touch of ugly cynicism in the thought of all friends as possible enemies. With all Bacon's shrewd sagacity and his flash of bright illumination he moves on a different level from the writer who pictured men living in an atmosphere of moral and spiritual light and entering upon an experience of abiding fellowship.

When we begin to commend the practice of fellowship to men, at once objectors arise. And the objectors have many significant and important things to say. Perhaps most of them may be summed up in the assertion that truthful men cannot have fellowship with liars—indeed, that liars can have no real fellowship with each other, and that a world into whose very structure so many lies have been built can scarcely be a world of fellowship. One can hardly deny that there is some truth in this assertion. But the whole matter is scarcely so simple as the assertion itself would seem to imply. For at least as far as Christianity goes the very strategy of fellowship lies in the fact that it is offered to the unworthy. The example of Jesus is clear enough at this point. He has no illusions as to the character of Judas. And he

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

suffers untold pain in the presence of that slimy and festering falseness which lies in the very presence of Judas among his disciples. But he does not banish him from his circle of intimate friends. He keeps him there. And he retains him in an important place. On Judas' side there are no end of obstacles to fellowship. But on the side of Jesus the way is kept open. And up to the very dramatic moment when Judas leaves the Last Supper, there is an implicit and perpetual appeal on the part of Jesus, that Judas give up his falseness and enter into that fellowship of light which Jesus is founding in the world. Judas did not respond. But many other men and women did respond. And Jesus was amply vindicated in his policy of offering fellowship to the unworthy.

Of course strict and mathematical logic would suggest that a man ought first to repent and turn from evil ways, and to secure fellowship after he has shown clear evidence of complete moral transformation. But the practical difficulty with this position is just that it is the fellowship which makes possible the repentance and the transformation. The

## FELLOWSHIP

of the experience of Jesus with Zacchæus is a perfectly good example of what I mean. This shrewd, dishonest little man climbed a tree that he might look down and get a good view of Jesus. Jesus looked up and saw his hard, wise little eyes looking out from among the leaves of the tree. Now, cool ethical logic might have suggested some such words as these on the part of Jesus: "You are a dishonest rogue. If you will stop stealing and return your ill-gotten gains, I will be your friend." It is clear enough that had Jesus made such an approach the matter would have gone no further. But Jesus did nothing of the sort. Instead he told Zacchæus in the friendliest possible way that he wanted to take dinner with him that day. Stunned and quite overcome, Zacchæus clambered down from the tree and hastened away to make ready for his guest. When Jesus came he treated his host with a kind of distinguished and happy courtesy. He seemed to give his friendship in the most easy and uncalculating fashion. There was no suggestion that Zacchæus was a man whose very presence was a kind of moral contamination. But all the while things

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

were happening inside Zacchæus. At last he could stand the inner pressure no longer. And he blurted out confessions and promises in words which fairly tumbled over each other. By giving fellowship first Jesus had wrought a miracle of moral and spiritual transformation. By welcoming Zacchæus to his own roomy life of noble light he made it impossible for Zacchæus to go on living in darkness.

The truth is that hard-headed and sometimes over adroit men of the world have more of moral and spiritual loneliness in their hearts than we sometimes suppose. If we offer them moral fellowship in far-reaching unselfish enterprises, we may be surprised at the response. The cold and calculating man of business encased in rigidities has a lonely spirit within the hard casing. His life, which sometimes takes the form of a battle without quarter, has vast spaces of emptiness within. He longs inarticulately for a fellowship he has never known. It is very significant that one of the first of the converts who went the full length of the daring and radical demands of Saint Francis was a keen and successful business man of Assisi,

## FELLOWSHIP

who had a sense of permanent values as well as of the worth of the passing currency of this transitory life. When high fellowship is offered, again and again men will prove worthy of the offer. So the evil in men's hearts and lives is not to prevent one's offering them the gracious gifts of happy fraternity.

When we come to great institutions it will be said that they are the reflection of actual differences among men and that therefore their number and variety are inevitable. It is true enough that men and women cannot be regimented so that a kind of goose step replaces the full and natural movement which normally expresses the differences of type and temperament. And it is good that this richness and variety among men should be reflected in the richness and variety of their institutions. But it can scarcely be claimed that this principle justifies the presence of nearly two hundred denominations of Christians in the United States. Such a situation can scarcely be said to be a fulfillment of the petition of Jesus in that great intercessory prayer "that they may all be one." Indeed, we have flouted the expressed

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

hope of Jesus. We have more than we know become his foes as we have divided the church which we have been taught rightly to believe is the body of Christ. In that able and stimulating volume, *Adventurous Religion*, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick tells of a church in an American city which gave itself the title, "The Church of God." It was all alone, holding communion with no other group, yet it bore that high and august title. By and by trouble came. The church in pain and faction divided. The group which went out called itself "The True Church of God." For a time all went well in "The True Church of God." But even there trouble and difference and faction entered. At length the dissensions could be tolerated no longer. A group went out and founded another church. They called themselves in high assurance "The Only True Church of God." This is all of the story which has come to us, but it is half tragic, half amusing to wonder what name could be used by those who went out from "The Only True Church of God" and what names could be found by those who represented later inevitable divisions.

It is not the divisions themselves which

## FELLOWSHIP

constitute the heart of the problem. It is the spirit back of the divisions. When one surveys all the denominations of Christians in America he remembers sadly the words of the New England poet, Robert Frost: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall."

We too want to know what these walls of denomination shut in. And most especially we want to know what they shut out. For our tragic divisions have made profound and trustful fellowship impossible in untold numbers of cases. The mind of Christ is surely not reflected in the present ecclesiastical situation in the United States. We are not walking in the light which comes from his radiant personality as we divide and subdivide in such amazing fashion. We must find our way to the unity of true spiritual fellowship by following him as we have never followed him before.

The whole world is passionately and wistfully longing for fellowship. And the suspicion which is the antithesis of fellowship is banking great storm clouds all about the edges of our sky.

Yet the next war, the scientists tell us, will

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

be of unbelievable deadliness. The front trenches will be everywhere. Women and children will share as they have never done before in the tragic menace of its far-flung campaigns. A city like New York will suffer in quite a new fashion from the deadly chemicals which will do duty in the next world-conflagration. And civilization itself can scarcely survive another vast cataclysm of conflict like that between 1914 and 1918. If another world war comes, it will not matter much on which side you fight. Nothing worth keeping will remain to either when the vast conflagration has come to an end.

In a situation like this, when, above everything else, we must keep matches away from the powder magazine, we are being told that patriotism demands that the high schools become centers of military training. The high-school boy gives character to the future of the nation. If his hero is a soldier, if the contentious spirit of war is planted in his heart, there are dark days ahead. It is the good will of the schoolboys of to-day which will keep the peace of the world of to-morrow.

Even if a quite new situation in military

## FELLOWSHIP

science had not made all the difference in the world in the whole matter of the menace of war, it would still be true that a nation free from the subversive poison of the military spirit would be best prepared for struggle at the point of arms. We all know the splendid record made by the Canadians and the Australians in the late war. The explanation was put in a sentence by a Canadian minister of state who crossed the U-boat infested Atlantic on the same ship on which I journeyed over the sea in the fall of 1918. "It is an army of citizens," he said, proudly. The military machine can never produce such fighting men as the freedom-loving republic, where the individuality of each citizen is preserved in proud and unhesitating strength.

To be sure, there must be such a thing as a nation's police force. And voluntary military training has its place in colleges and universities. But in these days of a new military technique it is a poor arm upon which to lean. It is our genius in the practice of good will, and not a new edition of the goose step, which is to make us able to deal with the critical and baffling situations which

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

will arise among the nations in the years which lie just ahead.

I suppose it is the knowledge of these elements in the whole world-wide situation which has caused some very eminent men to take almost unprecedented action. Dr. Frederick W. Norwood, the powerful minister of the City Temple in London, has been giving most of his time for months and will continue to give most of his time for months to come to a great campaign for peace all about Great Britain. Sunday after Sunday other men stand in his great pulpit while his own congregation gladly lends him to the whole nation for this far-reaching enterprise. And the Archbishop of Canterbury has taken the quite unprecedented step of suggesting that Anglican cathedrals and churches everywhere welcome him to their pulpits. So Anglican and Free Churchmen are joining in a tremendous endeavor to speak to the conscience of England and Scotland regarding the iniquity of war. The tragic need of the world has spoken its own word to the conscience of great leaders. And they are speaking to the world the word God has given them to speak.

## FELLOWSHIP

It is not strange that it should be so, for the fight for fellowship is the great battle of the church, and the call of the great forces which make for peace may well command its very mind and conscience and heart.

Perhaps after we have done our best, civilization will go down in the terrible holocaust of war. Perhaps after every cry of prophet and sage, the wild passions of men will be too much and we shall lose the slowly garnered treasures of the civilization of the whole great world. In 1914, before the last bitter conflict broke out, I attended a great military pageant at the Olympic in London. It took the form of a sham battle representing the last fight of Roman soldiers in Britain before that land was given over to the Barbarians with the waning strength of Rome. Mr. Asquith, then prime minister, sat in the royal box that afternoon, and I have often since wondered what his thoughts were that day. Did he suspect that soon dramatic presentation would be succeeded by grim reality?

It was a brilliant and remarkably staged spectacle. The last stronghold maintained by Roman soldiers was making its final

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

stand against the Barbarians. The wild, fierce men charged madly. And one by one the Roman soldiers fell, overcome by the sheer force of numbers. Every Roman sold his life dearly. But the disciplined courage of the very few was no match for the wild and impetuous ferocity of the great mass of foes who pressed upon them. Finally there was but one grim and stalwart soldier left upon the wall. He fought with desperate energy. His sword did marvelous execution. But at last he went down, and his body fell from the wall. So the light went out for centuries. And the order and peace Rome had brought vanished from the land. It may be so after we have done our best to save the world for fellowship and good will. But even in the face of that last and unbelievable catastrophe there are those who in a situation not unlike that of the grim Roman left alone upon the wall would have courage enough to give themselves to the very end to the great and high purpose of calling the fierce and wayward minds of men to ways of peace.

I do not believe, however, that such a tragic close is to come to the tale of the civil-

## FELLOWSHIP

ization of the world. I do not believe that we are to go down in ruin at last. I do believe that the forces of good will are stronger than the forces of hate. I do believe that the steadiest hands and minds in all the world are committed to a policy of conciliation and good will.

To be sure, there are those who declare that fellowship is impossible in the United States because we are living upon the brink of a volcano. Social unrest influenced by malign forces from Russia has become so menacing that a terrible eruption may come at any moment. A nation with its arms ready and its youth trained to meet any emergency is our only safety.

It is just a little hard to take this sort of thing seriously. There were people in England whose frayed nerves responded to the same fears. But since England has gone through the astounding and testing experience of a general strike, with Russia doubtless straining to see what would happen next, and ready to aid and abet in any possible fashion, and that general strike passed off practically without a casualty, the Red hysteria will hardly lift its head for a long

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

time in the British Isles. Yet if there has been such a thing as a real danger from Soviet influence, it was doubtless more menacing in England a year ago than it has ever been in the United States. If in the difficult days through which England has passed a few people had lost their heads as completely as have some people in the United States, one does not like to think of what might have happened.

The truth is that really subversive social propaganda thrives only where there are open sores of social maladjustment. Starving workers are likely to produce menacing unrest anywhere. At the moment the prosperity of the United States makes the idea of a social uprising laughable. And when the menace of later days, when our increased population presses against our food supply, actually comes, the way to meet the danger will be by squarely facing the problem along economic lines and not by a wild attempt to shoot the surplus population. In every country the righting of social and economic wrongs is the way to counteract all the influences which would threaten the orderly movement of life.

## FELLOWSHIP

On the other hand, the attempt to check free speech, to stifle the unfettered expression of opinion, produces an unrest which no brilliant military discipline can counteract. When in a time of peace men are invited to join groups where they are to hear menacing facts stated in solemn secrecy, wise men will pause and think long, long thoughts. In a republic, where every citizen has a right to know all the facts, why this strange and solemn secrecy? Is it because the alleged facts will not bear investigation? Men of trained minds with some historical perspective know that tyranny always has thrived upon assertions which, for patriotic reasons, could not be investigated. Indeed, one of the terribly poisonous aspects of war itself is just the fact that so many assertions made in solemn and austere secrecy prove to have no foundation at all when they are investigated in the cold, clear light of the days when the war is over. Any discussion which will not face the light of day is utterly without justification in the days of peace. And the dastardly and conscienceless misuse of secrecy in the days of war leaves a blight behind from which the nations are long in

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

recovering. Full freedom of speech and full freedom of investigation are the very foundations upon which a republic rests. It is the furtive whisperer, afraid to come into the light as he passes on his ugly suggestions of menacing forces in the republic, who has already passed across the line of patriotism into the dark and boggy regions where the foes of the republic dwell.

To be sure, there are hard and capable men who quite repudiate all the defining Christian principles. They believe that life is a battle to the death. They believe that unethical force is the only power upon which a man or a nation can depend. They believe in a race of blonde beasts holding a cowering world at bay. This philosophy of the jungle has a certain commanding virility. With the present development of military science it would lead to the suicide of civilization, but at least it has its own commanding energy. One can have at least a kind of scornful respect for it, when casting aside all subterfuge it appears in its own naked, ugly honesty. But at least let us keep this sort of thing free from any entanglement with that lofty and exhaustlessly powerful

## FELLOWSHIP

Personality who founded the Christian religion. Let us at least insist that the great Lord of good will who was nailed to the cross because he refused to surrender his own high loyalty to moral and spiritual values shall not be entangled in the activities of the cult of Mars. Let us insist that men shall at least show enough respect for the name which has put a new conscience into Western civilization to leave that name free from entanglement with that worship of unethical force against which his whole career was a protest, and which at last nailed him to the cross. Let no man claim his authority for the very principle which hounded him to the death.

The Christian Church in just as far as it is loyal to its Master does believe in the far-reaching power of impalpable moral and spiritual forces. It does believe in good will. It takes its stand firmly on the ground which its founder occupied. It closes the door against suspicion and hate and all the clever lies by means of which the vast military systems of the world have built up their strength.

The Christian Church believes that the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

time has come for a world-wide experiment of clear-minded good will. It welcomes the news of such a long and fruitful conversation as that between Herr Stresemann and M. Briand at the little eating place near Geneva, when at last Germany and France met to face together the facts of a difficult situation, putting aside suspicion and meeting each problem in direct and earnest co-operation.

The way of fellowship is a great and gracious highway. Only men of great faith walk in it. And as the light of God falls upon them they know that a divine imperative calls them into it. We have seen in how many ways the principle of the fellowship of moral and spiritual light relates itself to human experience. It is the light in which individuals must live. It is the light in which institutions become nobly fruitful. It is the light in which nations are to find their way from old barbarities to gracious civilization. The founder of Christianity put a new principle into the life of the world when he said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Jesus Christ is the creator of that fellowship which is the hope of the world.

## X

### CHARLES DARWIN, EVOLUTION, AND THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

“That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural.”—1 *Corinthians* 15. 46.

THE year 1809 was perhaps the greatest year of distinguished births which the nineteenth century produced. It was the year when that tragic and baffled genius, Edgar Allan Poe, first saw the light. It was the year when Alfred Tennyson, who so loved Virgil and, like the great Latin poet, deeply pondered his own age and set many of its meanings singing in immortal music, began his adventure in this curious world. Proudhon, the founder of philosophical anarchy, was born in this year. Gladstone, whose wizardry in giving to the figures of a budget a kind of purple romance and whose capacity to capture the moral imagination of a great nation made him one of the outstanding leaders of the century, was born in 1809.

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

And in this year Abraham Lincoln opened his eyes in that Kentucky cabin, from which he was to go out to become the noblest product of his nation's democracy. Such were some of the children who were first sensing the sights and sounds of a strange environment in the year when Charles Darwin was born.

The story of his life is the tale of one supreme and mastering devotion. It was at Cambridge University that he found himself, and it was the five-year voyage of the ship *Beagle* which gave him his great opportunity as a naturalist. The ship went quite around the world, spending much time in and near South America. It was while reading Malthus' discussion of the increase of population that the idea of the struggle for existence dawned upon him in a new light. The idea of natural selection took on new meaning, and the conception for which another scientist found the phrase, "the survival of the fittest," began to open up its possibilities. Darwin worked with a patience which is quite beyond praise. The five-year voyage of the *Beagle* gave him unequaled opportunities. Then for twenty

## CHARLES DARWIN

years he went on studying, collecting material, and patiently gathering together and classifying all his materials, verifying and correcting at every step. It is an almost unparalleled story of the patient and painstaking work of the greatest sort of scientist.

At last, in 1858, a curious and startling thing happened. From his friend, Alfred Wallace, Darwin received a communication announcing his reaching exactly the conclusions regarding evolution which had engrossed the mind of Darwin for twenty years. So modest and so eager to be fair to his friend was Darwin that he was willing to retire and let all the credit go to Wallace. This, however, was not to be. The work of the two men was presented simultaneously before the Linnæan Society, and it was at once clear, nobody acknowledging it more heartily than Wallace, that the flash of a great idea had indeed come to the younger man independently of the work of the elder; but it was Darwin who, by world-wide gathering of material and patient work through twenty years, had made the position in a singular way his own.

To be sure, Darwin was not the originator

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

of the idea of evolution. Most distinguished among his immediate predecessors was Lamarck, whose work still has great significance. And the story does not even begin with him or with Goethe or St. Hilaire or with Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles. There is a fine sentence in Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey's fascinating volume, *The River of Life*, in which he describes the fashion in which the patient and painstaking mountain-climbing of some modern scientist brings him to the top of the range only to make the discovery that some keen-minded Greek had shot an arrow to the very summit a couple of thousand years ago. It was so with evolution. Aristotle taught the general doctrine. And when we pass from the Greeks to the Romans, Lucretius paints a remarkable picture, unfolding like a cinema, of the development of animal life from simple origins. Darwin did, however, subject the idea of evolution to such scientific tests as had been unknown before. Nobody understood better than he that he could not say the last word even in the relatively small fields of the life of animals and the life of man to which he restricted his attention,

## CHARLES DARWIN

So general a principle was sure to be applied to various fields, and it was Herbert Spencer who, independently of Darwin, set the whole structure of the cosmos in the perspective of evolutionary thought. Every science and every art has felt the stimulus of this approach, and it is not too much to say that evolution has become not so much an explanation as a method which makes a place for itself in every sort of investigation and a spirit which suffuses all our thinking.

Darwin's books, *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, precipitated the most acrimonious sort of controversy. A good many people felt that everything which they held dear was not only endangered but quite destroyed if it became necessary to admit that man was descended from lower forms of life. People who had accepted with complacency the idea that man was made from dust drew back from the idea of an ancestry in the lower kingdoms. Someone has suggested that, after all, if it is a question of man's coming from mud or monkeys, the mud is not much more dignified. Of course, no scientist suggests that man is descended from monkeys, but only that men

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

and monkeys are twigs from a common bough. The truth is that the curious distaste with the thought of owing anything to lower forms is a strangely inconsistent thing. All the while we keep eating lower forms of animals, and the subtle miracles of digestion and our own organic life change what a little while ago was a cow grazing in a field into a poet writing lovely verses or an orator speaking eloquent words. What a little while ago were sheep grazing on the hillside appear upon dinner tables in appetizing form, and a little later have become the strength of working men and the insight of patient scholars. Even pigs are not disdained by many people as the source of energy which they like to believe they apply to great moral and spiritual tasks. Of course you can regard it either as a miracle or a humiliation. To some of us it seems a good deal of a miracle that from the lower animal forms there can be appropriated energies which express themselves in the beauty of architecture, the grace of poetry, and the stability of civilization. At all events, if a man could see in one collection all the turkeys and chickens and geese and

## CHARLES DARWIN

other fowl, all the cows and sheep and swine which have contributed to his physical organism, he might come to think of simian ancestry as a rather incidental matter.

It is probably true, however, that a good many people have become hostile to the idea of evolution not so much from distaste in respect to the thought of descent from lower forms of life as because the account of creation as given in the book of Genesis seems to them clearly to contradict the account which the scientific evolutionist gives of these matters. The whole subject requires clear and close thinking. It may be granted without hesitation that the all-knowing God held in the area of his thought every fact which has become the possession of modern scientists at the very time when the materials which make up the book of Genesis had their origin. Why, then, is not the book of Genesis a frankly and clearly evolutionary document? When we begin to think about the matter we see that it is not at all as simple as may at first sight appear. Suppose the great Master of Life had inspired the writings to be found in the book of Genesis in such a form that they would clearly and per-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

fectly represent the state of scientific knowledge in the year of our Lord 1925. It is clear at once that such writings would have been perfectly incomprehensible to every man alive when they were written. They would have looked upon them with dumb and amazed astonishment. You have to speak to men in the language of their own day, and the scientific thought and speech of the twentieth century would have puzzled and baffled and bewildered the men and women of that ancient time. More than that, it would have been completely without power to give a gripping and intelligible message to the men and women of every century since until the coming of our own time. But more than this. Science is all the while advancing. Soon the particular forms in which we clothe our knowledge will be antiquated, and if the book of Genesis were written in these forms, in all the untold generations and centuries which are yet to come it would speak in the language of an outgrown and more or less discredited state of knowledge. Suppose, then, that the great Master of Life had inspired the writing of the materials to be found in the book of Genesis in language

## CHARLES DARWIN

which would express the ultimate truth, which is yet centuries and centuries beyond our ken. It is at once clear that in the age when it was written and in every succeeding age, including our own, until that very distant time when the final forms of knowledge begin to appear, such writing would be incomprehensible. It would be completely baffling and completely bewildering. Is there any other way in which the problem could be met? There is, indeed, the method which in the wisdom of God was actually used. This method would give great and compelling moral and spiritual truth in the very language and the very thought-forms of the people to whom the moral and spiritual message was to be given. Then they could understand it, and men of a later day could see just how it was given to them, and just how it was brought within the range of their mind and conscience. This moral and spiritual message would be quite independent of the mental thought-forms of the period when it was given and would be commanding and authentic long after those thought-forms had ceased to be compelling. From the first prophet until Jesus every

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

messenger of God had to speak in the thought-forms of his own day, and in doing so there was no blind commitment of mankind to the passing utensils through which the eternal truth was conveyed. The Genesis stories give an interpretation of the character of God, of the nature of man, of the tragedy of sin, which probes to the very depths of human experience. And these are seen all the more clearly when they emerge from primitive forms of thought and command the conscience of men of every sort of civilization and mental life. Seen in this light, there is nothing in the moral and spiritual message of the book of Genesis which comes into conflict with any assured results of modern science.

As a matter of fact, taken by themselves, the postulates of evolution are neither Christian nor unchristian. You can so interpret evolution as to make it antichristian. You can so interpret evolution as to make it express the very genius of Christianity. The evolutionary doctrine is a good deal like a Pullman car. It carries saints and it carries rogues. It carries bootleggers and it carries Christian missionaries. Because a traveler

## CHARLES DARWIN

found a good many bad men on a Pullman car he would not thenceforth refuse to ride on a Pullman. The passengers are responsible for what they bring to the car. The car is not responsible for the sort of passengers it carries. If we were to allow anti-christian forces to control the means of intellectual locomotion known under the name of evolution, it would simply mean that we are allowing the enemy to gain for themselves the most effective means of transportation. That would be an extremely strange thing to do in a war.

The question, then, is not one which has to do with whether we are going to be evolutionists. It has to do with the sort of evolutionists we are going to be. Now, the man who interprets evolution as a perfectly mechanical and material process, with no causal or controlling power outside the mechanical and impersonal relationships which the process reveals, has, of course, given away the whole Christian position. But there is nothing in the facts of evolution which makes such a position necessary. The man who does this sort of thing is simply using the letters of the evolutionary alpha-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

bet to spell "atheism." The evolutionary alphabet furnishes just the letters needed to spell "God." After all, there is no particular use blaming the alphabet if men insist on using its letters to spell wrong words. Men have been godless who have never heard of evolution. And men have been saints who have believed in evolution. The house of evolution—to change our figure—is a good deal like the material world in this respect, that it supports both saints and sinners.

The man who holds a personal and ethical and spiritual view of the world is sometimes almost startled at the fashion in which his positions enable him to be an evolutionist in a deeper and more understanding and fruitful fashion. Let us inspect the matter in the light of some of its possibilities in this regard. When our organist plays the "Pilgrims' Chorus" on the great organ which has brought so much happiness to us all, we instinctively feel a great evolutionary movement in the noble composition. On it goes, and we feel that each movement is an advance toward a great consummation, which comes at last. But nobody would think of

## CHARLES DARWIN

calling one note the father or the grandfather of the notes which follow. The unseen organist is the really effective power which gives us the gracious and inspiring music. You can think of the composition very completely as the evolution of a musical idea. But if you want to explain it, you must remember the musician unseen by so many of you. And that great "Pilgrims' Chorus" which we call life moves with a series of characteristics which the scientist can note and catalogue. He can tell us the tale of its unfolding evolution. But if you want to explain it, you must go to the great unseen Musician. You must go to Almighty God.

Here you come to the great divide. When you have asked one question you have reached the ultimate matters. And this is the question: Is evolution a self-sufficient and self-running process, without any place for moral and spiritual values and without any place for Almighty God, or is it the perpetual activity of the perfectly good and loving Father whose face we see in the face of Jesus Christ? Here the issue is sharp and clear enough. The man who answers

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

the question in the first way is not a Christian, and the man who answers it in the second way does not cease to be a Christian, though he is a firm and eager believer in evolution as the chosen method by which God works. The man who refuses to believe in the unseen musician because the notes can be fitted together in a mathematical plan will, after all, not prevent our loving the musician who has poured his very heart out in melody and harmony which have given us a new sense of the meaning of life.

The Copernican theory of the universe ran the same gantlet which other scientific views must face. Doubtless it seemed very clear to some pious men that it was impossible to believe in God if the earth moved around the sun. The literal interpretation of the Bible was, of course, all against the Copernican view. And so good men set themselves against advancing knowledge. But there remains no one so poor mentally as to do them reverence. And the last strange, brilliant defense of the old position was by an astonishingly gifted Negro preacher, who was a genius in his way, who held great audiences enthralled by his adroit

## CHARLES DARWIN

and telling logic as he delivered his lecture, "The Sun Do Move." There is, I suppose, not a single advocate of the position which has gotten for itself the name of Fundamentalism who would not gladly admit that the Copernican theory holds all the field. In that concession he really concedes his whole case. A man who can believe in the Copernican theory has admitted in principle every position which the Christian believer needs as he relates the new knowledge to biblical statements. And the man who sees in the Copernican view of the universe only a sublime view of God at work has already in principle accepted just the position from which to interpret evolution from the Christian view.

The really searching question, of course, has to do not with the solid saints who will hold to the religious verities, whatever comes and whatever goes. It is the new generation, to whom evolution is the very framework of all knowledge, of whom we must think. Believers in evolution they must be if their whole intellectual integrity is not to be shattered. Believers in the Christian religion many of them—most of them, we trust—

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

would like to be. Are we able to help them? Have we a vital word in an hour which, for them, is a time of intellectual crisis? There are many of us who believe that at this very point Christianity meets one of its greatest, one of its most significant and one of its happiest opportunities.

The young men and women who are coming in such amazing numbers from our institutions of learning have a knowledge and an understanding of the whole biological process which would have been a little disconcerting to their fathers and entirely astounding to their grandfathers. They have watched the emergence of vegetable and animal life from the water in the great adventure of living on the land. They have watched the vast and varied struggle of life up to man and through all the stages of civilization, and they are ready to ask, "What is back of it all, and whither does it lead?" They are ready to hear the great reply: "God is back of it all, and its goal is revealed in the stainless and glowing and radiantly self-forgetful personality of Jesus Christ." When once they have followed the long and dramatic story, the great epic of

## CHARLES DARWIN

life upon this planet, seeing in every stage the presence and the activity of the invisible God, a new sacredness and a new glory come to all of life. And when they have seen emerging at the very heart of this tale of struggle and survival the mighty and glorious personality of Jesus Christ, when they have seen that everything else was on the way to him, and that everything is still on the way to the achievement of his kingdom, religion ceases to be an incidental part of life; it becomes the defining meaning of the biological process itself.

There is an understanding of the significance of Jesus so profound and so deeply related to the new knowledge which has come into our possession that "that One Face" looks out of every page of a textbook on chemistry, gazes forth from the most intricate analysis in physics, gives a genius and a soul to biology, becomes the inspiring genius of the new psychology, so that in a new and most glorious fashion the old word is fulfilled, "that in all things he may have pre-eminence." All these realms belong to him. It would be a poor, foolish mind which would retain for him the realms of phrases

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

which have lost their vitality and prevent his entering in triumph the vast and far-reaching realms where he has the right to rule.

It is a wonderful characteristic of the vital writers of the Old Testament and the New that they make their own every potent word in the contemporary vernacular. Ezekiel makes the prophetic message a thing with new and vital seizure because he uses the very forms of Babylonian thought and experience to make it commanding. Paul bends the stately Roman Empire itself to the purpose of being a vehicle for the making vivid of the conception of the Empire of Jesus Christ. Why cannot we be as wise in our own time? One can imagine with what zest and zeal Paul and Ezekiel would have used the very passwords of evolutionary thought to make more potent and more effective the message of religion to the men of this tremendous day. The whole intellectual adventure of scientist and philosopher and artist belongs to Jesus Christ. We claim them all for him. We come with a right of eminent domain to make them a part of the vast Empire of Jesus Christ.

It is not strange that Paul, whose mind

## CHARLES DARWIN

played over such vast areas, used a phrase which it was more than fitting to select as a sort of watchword at the beginning of this sermon. We are not claiming that Paul was an evolutionist before the days of evolutionists. We are claiming that there is a suggestiveness and a significance not soon exhausted in his seminal phrase: "that is not the first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." The phrase is capacious enough to hold the whole Christian interpretation of evolution. Life indeed begins on low levels. But it does not remain there. It aspires; it climbs. It seeks great goals. And the spiritual is the consummation toward which it moves. Why the movement, we ask, and why the goal? There is only one answer to such questions. God himself sets in motion the movement. God himself presides over it. God himself provides the goal. The evolutionary process cannot account for Jesus Christ; but Jesus Christ can account for the evolutionary process. It is in his face that the new knowledge is seen in all its human meaning and in all its human relationships. It is he who gives a soul to the age-long struggle. It is he who changes a

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

process into a moral and spiritual progress. It is he who brings to light the divine fellowship which has been implicit in the whole evolutionary process. It is in him that the new knowledge becomes redemptive and science itself the handmaid of religion.

## XI

### CRITICISM AND THE CREATIVE IMPULSE

"I am . . . the truth."—*John* 14. 6.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—*John* 8. 32.

Not many men would care directly to dispute the emancipating power of truth. Yet we are tempted to be contented with lip service. And probably a good many of us have a suspicion that truth is not always a desirable possession. A little while ago Sir Philip Gibbs published a book entitled *Now It Can Be Told*. The very theme of the book conceded the position that there are times when it is not wise to tell the whole truth. It seems to be taken for granted that wars must be waged with lies as well as with bullets. And this is one reason why there must be such tremendous moral liquidation after a great conflict. But the matter is

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

more far-reaching. Mr. J. St. Loe Strachey's keen and suggestive book, *The River of Life*, contains an arresting series of what its author calls "desperate sayings." One of them, attributed to Walpole, is to the effect that not many men should be prime ministers because it is not a good thing that many people should know how evil a thing human nature is. Here is the most cynical assumption that we shall be happier and that life will move along in more effective fashion if a good deal of the disagreeable truth about men is hidden from us. There is even more to be said. We are coming to have an uneasy suspicion that the flood of truth which the triumphant natural sciences are bringing within our reach may not turn out to be good for us. Mr. Haldane's audacious little book, *Daedalus*, frankly admits that the truth science is putting at our disposal may lead to tragic results. Mr. Bertrand Russell, whom one does not ordinarily suspect of interest in these values, states with almost prophetic fervor in *Icarus* that the increase of knowledge does not necessarily mean the increase of character, and admits the inevitable nature of the tragic

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

results which must follow if the two do not grow together. And Professor Schiller, in his superior and candid fashion, suggests in *Tantalus* that with all the newly comprehended truth at our disposal we seem to be dashing toward the precipice and somehow expecting a miracle to save us. It appears, then, that the case for truth is not quite so simple and not quite so obvious as might at first sight appear.

In spite of all this, however, we do have a very deep intuition that truth ought to bring emancipation, and we feel a certain moral elevation when we resolve to tell the truth at all costs. We feel a good deal of sympathy with the satirist in the little allegory at the beginning of Maarten Maarten's novel, *God's Fool*. This man, we are told, brought ugly truth remorselessly to the attention of the men among whom he lived. He was a caustic and incessant critic. At last his friends could stand it no longer. So they deliberately killed him. Then they gathered around his still and silent form. "This man hated the world," they said. "He treated it like a football. He kicked it." The dead man opened his left eye. "Yes,"

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

he said, "I kicked the world. But I always kicked it toward the goal." That, however, is just the difficulty. Can we always be sure that we are kicking the world toward the goal? A strange sense of futility comes once and again to the truth-telling critic. Is life genuinely improved by his skillful and biting irony? Are men better because of his mordant and corrosive wit. The experiment was made with peculiar skill and with the most astounding intellectual resources by that great humanist Erasmus, probably the mightiest man of letters in the modern world with the possible exception of Voltaire. Erasmus proposed to laugh the old age to scorn. His *Praise of Folly* and the acid power of his other writings of delicate and graceful and penetrating criticism were to leave the foe completely discomfited and overthrown. All Europe was his battlefield. The shafts of his wit did execution in every institution of learning and the power of his merciless satire was felt wherever men had power to think. His pen seemed mightier than many swords. And yet does anyone doubt that when the deep and terrible passions of men were once fully aroused it was

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

the almost titanic power of Luther which really brought in the new day? Against men's power of passionate prejudice and hatred there came a foe armed with more deadly weapons than the gay and caustic and merciless wit of Erasmus. Passion was met by passion instead of by the cool and cutting laughter of the mind. The critic was succeeded by the prophet before the work was done. But the apostle of the remorseless light of criticism is also forced to face the effect upon his own mind of a constant mood of observation and analysis and appraisal. The body of men about such tasks all too easily become a group of distinguished observers with a detached brilliancy of mind. We can scarcely deny that Prince Hamlet is all too perfect a portraiture of the college man of a certain type, a man who is strong in respect of analysis and weak in the presence of the demand for decision, strong in respect of criticism and weak in the presence of the demand for action. The mind busy about the task of trying to tell the truth by no means always finds it easy to incarnate the truth. The skillful and pungent critic who is candid enough to turn the processes

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

of his appraisal upon his own life often discovers that he is without a productive and inspiring principle for his own activity. He has cool clarity of thought. He has no creative passion. And yet without a compelling creative impulse the great things in art and life are beyond our reach.

The struggle between the mind of the critic and the mind which is the happy receptacle of creative inspirations is shown clearly in two volumes from the pen of a highly gifted man whose name is familiar in Harvard University. As a critic of remorseless candor he wrote one volume to show that the nineteenth century was incapable of providing a keen and outreaching mind with the materials of a true education. But the master of all the mordant irony which appears in this book also turned to the thirteenth century and fell captive to the charms of a beauty edged about with superstition as it expressed itself in the unity of the life of that amazing age. That the mind fed by all the searching demands of that great word "Veritas" should have been capable of so uncritical an acceptance and at the same time of such gloomy and glittering candor shows

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

how full of stress was the fight between the two moods.

When we turn to the ages when the human spirit has shown a profound capacity for seminal feeling and creative action, we come upon other aspects of a situation which is revealing very baffling and conflicting elements. If there ever was a creative age of the human spirit, surely such a period was found in fifth-century Athens. "The passionate pursuit of passionless perfection"—to use the effective phrase of Professor Shorey—came to be not merely the endeavor of an individual but the endeavor of a people. And the result in restrained and gracious beauty of life and language and building, and, indeed, in all the expressions of the human spirit, gave a unity and a loveliness to the Greek achievement which will haunt men's imagination as long as they care for order which blossoms into beauty and for the loveliness which feels the steadying hand of noble discipline. The creative impulse back of it all remains one of the most notable of the phenomena which have to do with the history of man's adventure in this baffling potential world. But the very pos-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

sibility of this creative energy was secured by fixing the attention upon certain favorable aspects of human experience and ignoring all others. It did not consist in telling the whole truth. Attic civilization was based upon the lie of slavery. It is quite fair to say "the lie of slavery" just because slavery can exist only where men do not tell the whole truth about human nature. By a selective process—unconscious if you will, yet none the less significant for that—Greek life became creative through emphasizing a part of life and ignoring the pressing tragic meaning of the rest.

If you turn to another great and creative period to which we have already referred, that thirteenth century which felt the gracious and winsome piety of Saint Francis, which produced the brilliant and many-sided dialectic of the Summa of Saint Thomas, which reached upward in a sort of deathless aspiration in the glory of Gothic architecture, which achieved an imperial magnificence in the farflung authority of Innocent III, we cannot doubt that we come upon one of the rare and radiant ages of the world. We must also say that it is an age

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

with a sounder sense of actuality than fifth-century Athens. The gargoyle on the cathedral tells a tale of daring honesty. Greek art ignored all that side of life expressed by the gargoyle in order to achieve its delicate and restrained and consummate beauty. Gothic architecture caught up the gargoyle and fastened it upon structures which conquered its ugliness by their sheer majesty and gave to art a new and rugged honesty. It is also true that the thirteenth century expresses an intuition which has an element of exhaustlessness which we can hardly claim for the fifth century. The true symbol of Greek art is the circle absolutely complete and absolutely final, and for that very reason somehow unsatisfactory in a world where the complete is always beyond our reach. The true symbol of Gothic architecture is the pointed arch which is in a way broken and incomplete, but which perpetually points onward to infinite reaches of experience and growth and fulfillment. Greek art is like the period at the end of a sentence. Gothic architecture always astounds you by a sense of the infinity beyond. And so it may seem for the moment that the thir-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

teenth century reconciles candor and creative passion. But when we analyze closely it becomes only too evident that here too we have a unity which is built upon such masses of misconception and superstition, and of feeling without sound or adequate foundation as fairly bewilder the student. A significant share of the intellectual activity of the modern world has had to do with escaping from the misconceptions and the superstitions which were heartily and unhesitatingly accepted by the thirteenth century. And even our enjoyment of this splendid period is made possible by a selective process which ignores very unhappy and very unlovely aspects of its life.

Our dilemma is then clearly before us. If, on the one hand, we choose the clear and cool exercise of the critical faculty, that remorseless loyalty to truth which faces the last ugly fact without hesitation or evasion, it seems that we inevitably slay that creative impulse upon which all the grandeur and the glory of civilization depend. And if, on the other hand, we passionately pursue the creative impulse and insist upon finding and expressing mighty creative passion, it seems

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

that we must experience a selective process which ignores many an ugly truth, and in effect denies many another. Our criticism will deplete our personalities so that we shall become incapable of constructive achievement, or our glowing and creative enthusiasm will banish our critical candor.

Of course, we cannot remain caught in the confusions of such a situation if there is any way out. We instinctively become Hegelians, and, having faced the thesis of critical candor and the antithesis of creative passion, we seek for a synthesis in which they may be united in happy and productive activity.

At this point in our search it is well to inspect the intellectual habit and method of that curious and fascinating man Socrates. In an age which loved beauty Socrates disarmed men by his unabashed and undeniable ugliness. There was something definite, almost admirable, about such a coherent and organized defiance of the laws of beauty as you saw whenever Socrates passed down the street. But it was his mental and moral and spiritual qualities which captured men's imagination. On the one hand he was the mas-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

ter of a critical faculty unequalled before his time and unsurpassed in the time which has followed. The Socratic irony is an instrument of critical satire of almost bewildering penetration and power. No man has been able better to tear away the protective robes of intellectual pretense from a mind of omniscient ignorance. Socrates asked a few simple and disarming questions, and the man of self-conscious assurance suddenly knew the utter poverty and nakedness of his mind. And those who listened to the conversation knew it as well. The subtle, mocking laughter of the critical mind sounds through all the conversations of this astounding man. But this is not all there is of Socrates. Back of his critical acumen lies a great faith. If he fears individual eccentricity, he believes tremendously in the verdict of mankind; if he feels that the mind of the individual may all too easily lead us astray, he believes that the verdict of the whole mind of man can be depended upon. And this perception that what defines a class will be right even if what characterizes an individual is wrong is the basis of what became a commanding system of philosophy in the hands of the

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

greatest pupil of Socrates. At the moment we are not concerned with all the baffling philosophical problems involved in the origin and the meaning of the philosophy of Ideas. But we are very much concerned with the fact that the very mind which achieved such critical acumen in Socrates bent the same powers of searching analysis to a kind of thinking out of which a great constructive view of life emerged. So analysis became synthesis. So criticism was transformed into the creative impulse.

But Jesus is a supreme example of that for which we are searching. No man ever moved with more destructive power among things evil and inadequate in human life. "It has been said unto you by them of olden time . . . but I say unto you." So ancient prejudices and superstitions and passions went down before his corrosive and commanding speech. And it has been a central characteristic of the religion which he founded that from within its own life it has produced critics unhesitating and remorseless and full of surgical power. But the central fact about Jesus was the creative passion which he aroused. The negative is

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

always on the way to the positive. The "Thou shalt not" was always on the way to a "Thou shalt." The criticism which emancipated from prejudice and superstition was always on the way to the inspiration which released productive and active powers. The vision of God and of goodness, the sense of brotherhood and of joyous and creative living which Jesus brought to men, filled them with a glad surprise. They forgot that he was a critic in the midst of the creative impulses which he set free. In fact, the criticism was a by-product of an inspiring energy in which candor at white heat fused with a radiantly glowing and permanent enthusiasm.

It is in precisely this sense, then, that he is the truth, a truth with the most unhesitating surgical power and yet a truth of the most kindling inspiration. And it is in this fashion that those who know the truth as he interprets and incarnates it are emancipated, set free from superstition and prejudice and limitation and set free for creative action. His criticism does not deplete the creative impulse. And the very fact that out of such searching candor can come such joyous con-

## CRITICISM AND IMPULSE

confidence gives us a new sense of the possibilities of life. There is always a golden faith at the heart of the most terrible criticism of Jesus. He never allows the actual ugliness to shut from his view the possible beauty. He never judges any man merely by his history. He always keeps in mind the man's capacity. And so out of his word of judgment comes a word of hope. He gives the astounded Peter a great and honorable responsibility at the very moment when the weakness and cowardice of that temperamental disciple seem to have broken his life completely. The very genius of Christianity as a force in the world is seen in the astounding combination of criticism and inspiration. So men are saved from malignant and destructive falsehood. So they are saved for a life of joyous and productive participation in the truth.

When criticism and creative faith live in one personality, you have the faithful expression of the tradition of Jesus and you have the surest capacity for the service of the world. When criticism and the creative impulse supplement each other in the life of an institution, it brings to society that

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

which is most deeply needed in every period. And so for men and for institutions the secret is found in that personality which possesses the combination of correctness and emancipation, of criticism and of inspiration.

## XII

### THE TWO HIGHWAYS

“And ■ highway shall be there, and ■ way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.”—*Isaiah* 35. 8.

“In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.”—*Isaiah* 19. 23-25.

SOMETHING like thirty years ago ■ new epoch in English-speaking biblical scholarship was introduced by the publication of the stately volumes of Dr. James Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*. At about the same time Professor Cheyne, of Oxford, published his brilliant if sometimes erratic *Encyclopædia Biblica*. One article in the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

latter work is said to have made necessary the publication of an extra volume by Doctor Hastings. This article had to do with the roads of the ancient world. It was written with such complete command of all the materials, with such monumental erudition, that at once it took a place of singular and masterful authority. In truth, there is a far-reaching and many-sided significance in highways. When Chaucer in the fourteenth century prepared to picture the whole of England on a great canvas, he chose a highway—the road to Canterbury—for the scene of his great narrative poem. In palaces he might have met nobles. In hovels he might have met the very poor. But upon the public highway he could find nobles and prelates, scholars and farmers and tradesmen and townsmen, and men of wealth and men of poverty, ascetics and voluptuaries. On the road to Canterbury he met all fourteenth-century England.

The tale of civilization itself has been told in highways. In the new land two pioneers make their clearings. One goes across the intervening land to the shack of the other. The visit is returned. There are footprints.

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

And after a while the footprints become a trail. The trail becomes a road, and with the increase of population and the development of the forces of settled life the road becomes a highway.

The very word "highway" has thus come to seize men's imaginations. The highway is the symbol of settled life. The men with whom you walk in the highway are your comrades and friends. They help to mold your life and opinions, and you in turn help to construct their thoughts and ideals and convictions.

There are two great passages in the book of Isaiah which deal with highways. One of them is familiar to every reader of the Bible. The other is scarcely known to the typical reader of the Scriptures at all. The familiar passage describes the highway of holiness upon which the unclean shall not walk. It has to do with the highway of exclusiveness. The second passage, almost unobserved and unknown, consists of what without exaggeration we may call the most astounding series of sentences in the Old Testament. It tells of a highway of comradely communication between those ancient enemies Assyria

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

and Egypt and Israel. It foretells the day when all these shall worship Jehovah, and all these shall be known as his people, the work of his hands, his inheritance. It opens vistas of fraternity. It has to do with the highway of friendliness.

The two streams of thought run right through the Old Testament. Clearly enough they represent different points of view. They meet in clash and contention. And their reconciliation may seem to be a very difficult matter. If we look upon the history of Israel with these two highways in mind, we shall see many things in very new and very significant relations. We are not surprised that the building of the highway of exclusiveness was Israel's first task. It is always so in the life of the individual and in the life of the nation. The integrity of the individual and the race is a very important matter. And life is built up by a tremendous process of exclusion. Years ago I was talking one night with a powerful corporation lawyer of New York City whose knowledge of men was wide and deep. We were speaking of a certain university president who could win men's interest and en-

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

thusiasm almost at once by singular gifts of personal charm and the deft and fascinating way in which he seemed to give himself to them. I was a very young man at the time and I said to the grave, wise old lawyer: "The president has many confidants, has he not?"

A deep, curious light of analysis came burning in his expressive eyes as he flashed back, "Has he any confidants?"

In a moment, I understood and said, quietly: "You mean that if a man has too many confidants he really has no confidants at all."

Men and nations must have high regard for the genuine meaning of their lives. Relentlessly and remorselessly they must exclude some things, for the sake of the very strength and vitality of their character.

When the nomadic people came from the hills into Palestine they brought with them the relatively clean and lofty insights of a worship tempered in the mountains. They came into an agricultural country. And if they were to thrive here, it was necessary for them to become farmers. They found the land occupied by people who knew how to

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

make the land productive and people who in their own fashion were very religious. For these farmers of Canaan religion and farming were not two things but one thing. And the fecundity of the soil and the fecundity of the herds was a great matter with them, their religion was literally saturated by these things undisciplined and unrestrained by nobler sanctions. Practices which civilization has condemned as beastly and loathsome ran riot in their religion. But to them all this was part of their life as farmers. If the invaders would be successful in agriculture, they must practice religion in the same way. So came on the great fight between the religion from the hills, with a clean air sweeping through it, and the hot and untempered religion of Canaan, so much more interested in fecundity than in character. The native people knew many secrets which they had learned in years of practice of the farmers' art, and so usually the soil cultivated by the invaders was far less productive than that cared for by the men of Canaan. The situation seemed plain enough. If the men from the hills would accept the native worship, they would have

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

abundant crops and abundant flocks. So the fight for an ethical religion grew bitter and stern. In many individual cases the invaders made terms with the native religion. There was an undertone of unethical naturalistic worship in Israel for many a generation. But on the whole the nobler religion won in this great fight. Confronted by the most practical and searching tests, Israel chose the way of the clean faith from the hills rather than the way of the hot and lawless indulgences of the religion of Canaan. The highway of exclusiveness was actually being built. And the unclean were not allowed to walk in it.

In the ninth century Israel met another crisis. And as a result of its experiences more work was done in building the highway of exclusiveness. The monarch of the little Northern Kingdom with its homely agricultural life married a brilliant and fascinating Phœnician princess. His bride came from a land versatile, cosmopolitan, and in touch with all the life of the great world. Phœnician ships went everywhere. The Phœnicians were the carriers of the world, and perhaps influenced it more deeply than we have

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

sometimes realized. We remember the phrase of Carlyle—"May blessings be upon the head of Cadmus, the Phoenicians, or whoever it was that invented books." The glittering princess came from a gorgeous life in the great world to the little kingdom of farmers determined to make its throne the center of a sophisticated court filled with courtiers who were finished men and with equally polished women of the world. We can imagine how her flashing personality appealed to the restless youth of Samaria. Here was an opportunity to escape from provinciality into a rich and flaming and emancipated life. It seemed that Jezebel would sweep all before her. To be sure, the process of making rude farmers into polished gentlemen was to be accompanied by the acceptance of the worship of the Phoenician Baal. And this cult was cruel and lascivious enough. Then as now men of social distinction were not always men of goodness of heart or cleanness of life. It seemed a little thing to give up the provincial worship of Jehovah for all the glittering promise of citizenship in the great world. But just here emerged that grim and virile and stalwart

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

prophet Elijah. He knew the deadly moral menace of the Phœnician cult. He knew the moral debauchery which would follow in its wake. He loved with an unspeakable devotion the clean religion out of the hills which enshrined Jehovah in its heart. So the terrible struggle came on. The cult of Baal and the worship of Jehovah were set in battle array. And when the fight was over and the sun had set the worship of Jehovah was triumphant. The religion which had turned from the corrupting influence of the hectic religion of Canaan also turned from the glittering social distinction of the corrupt Phœnician cult. The highway of exclusiveness was being built with thoroughness and skill. And it was becoming very clear that the unclean were not to be allowed to walk in it.

By the time of the return of the exiles from Babylonia the highway of exclusiveness was completely and strongly built. Israel had become thoroughly conscious of its mission. It viewed itself as entirely set apart among the nations of the earth. Great walls were built about the highway where its people walked. The exclusiveness which

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

had been a daring dream now became an accomplished fact.

Then a strange thing happened. The strength of Israel became a weakness. The stern sense of a message and a mission, of the integrity of its own life, hardened into a cold self-consciousness, a rigid aloofness, which sapped the very sources of its moral and spiritual vitality. The day of the brave and dauntless prophet began to turn into the day of the complacent self-conscious Pharisee. In truth, men must always watch their virtues, for in the most disconcerting fashion virtues have a way of turning into ugly vices. So Israel's great virtue of loyalty became the ugly vice of a hard and narrow bigotry.

But this process did not work its way through the life of Israel without understanding and caustic criticism. When the loyal heart was turning into the cold and hard heart great spirits called out in protest and in condemnation. They knew that an Israel with an ingrowing and self-conscious isolation could never do the work of God's servant in the world. By the time Jesus came this narrow and intolerant spirit had become the great foe of any full and

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

serviceable spiritual life. Jesus was all the while beating the wings of his generous spirit against narrow intolerance and bigotry. He poured forth parable after parable to rouse men from their selfish lethargy. He told of a lost coin and all the satisfaction when it was found, of a lost sheep and of the gladness when it was recovered, and of a lost son and of the father's deep joy when he found his way to the old home.

But long before the time of Jesus strong and brilliant voices had been lifted in protest. There was for instance the delightful little book of Ruth. Dr. George Matheson declared that the Scriptures are always entirely original in dealing with any human experience, and that so it happens that the great love story of the Old Testament is the tale of the love of a young woman for her mother-in-law. In the days when Benjamin Franklin was one of the most popular men in Paris, it is said he gathered together a group of French literati, telling them of a wonderful idyl from the ancient Orient which had come into his possession. Pressed by their curious interest, he read the tale aloud. They were charmed, even fascinated

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

by the tale and begged to know where he had found it. At last with his cryptic smile he confessed that it lay hidden away in the Old Testament Scriptures. But what is the meaning of this book of Ruth? A man of Israel, his wife and two sons, driven by need, go away into a foreign land. The sons marry daughters of the alien people among whom they are dwelling. By and by the father and the two sons die. The mother, aged and weighed down by sorrow, decides to return to her own land and her own people. And one of these foreign daughters, with a love all radiant with spiritual beauty, forsakes her own land to return with her mother-in-law to Israel. So full of beauty and goodness is she that she wins her way in wondrous fashion among the people of her mother-in-law, and in the consummation of the story she marries into what becomes the royal line of Israel, and so becomes the great-grandmother of the mighty King David. Here is a fairly astonishing appreciation of the character and the value of a person of foreign blood. With infinite tenderness the author tells the tale of this alien whom high-hearted devotion brought to

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

Israel. And in the startling climax you are brought to feel that David himself received something from this gracious woman of foreign blood. The kingly line of this most exclusive people required a contribution from an alien race.

Then there is that entirely extraordinary document, the book of Jonah. Here one meets with racial exclusiveness and arrogant hatred in all its unloveliness, and here it is dealt with by means of a satire wonderfully delicate and gentle, but all the more effective for that. The tale is fastened to the name of an old-time prophet, Jonah. The name means "dove." And perhaps the satire of the author begins with this name. For in the Semitic world one's name and one's character were supposed to correspond.

How undovelike this prophet was!

The voice of God spoke to this prophet. "Dove," he said in effect, "go to that great and mighty city of Nineveh and declare that its wickedness is to bring its ruin." But Jonah was a shrewd man according to his lights—strange and dim lights indeed. He hated Nineveh, and the unwelcome thought occurred to him that if Nineveh heard its

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

sins condemned, it might repent and so escape. The risk was too great. He would not go to Nineveh. He started to travel as fast as he could travel to the other end of the world.

Then the gentle, delicate satire begins clearly to appear. A storm overtakes the ship bearing the prophet who is trying to get away from the will of God. And what gentlemen the heathen sailors prove to be! They treat their passenger with a courtesy which is beyond praise. It is only at his own request that they cast him into the sea. And it is with the utmost reluctance that they carry out his suggestion. On the whole, you have a fine picture of the fairness and good feeling of men at sea.

By and by the prophet is safe on land again, and once more the great imperative of God's command comes to him. This time he goes to Nineveh. And as he goes he cherishes the happy thought that perhaps, after all, the people will not repent. Then he can have the grim pleasure of remaining near while the city is destroyed.

Soon the streets of the great metropolis are ringing with the prophet's terrible

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

words—"Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

And soon the prophet's fears, and not his hopes, are justified. For everyone in the city—king and peasant, man of wealth and beggar—joins in deep and contrite repentance. Sackcloth and ashes everywhere proclaim their acceptance of the prophet as a messenger of God, and their deep contrition. And the great God, seeing this vast act of penitence, forgives the city and withholds the hand of destruction.

The prophet with the name of Dove and the undovelike nature is unhappy indeed. What an unsatisfying thing it is to have a God you have to share with all the world. An unshared God who gives strength to your hates and wings to your hostilities would please Jonah. He decides that he would rather be dead than be the servant of such a God—a God whose friendship can be had by anybody for the asking!

He makes a sort of shelter and sits sulking under it. A sudden growth climbs about and casts its shade over him. "Here," says Jonah, "is something all my own. I will not love God. I will love the vine. Better

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

■ vine all my own than a God I must share with Nineveh." But the next day the vine withers and the sulking prophet does not have even its few leaves to call his own. Then the great friendly God speaks to Jonah asking him if he does well to be angry. Bitterly he replies that he does well to be angry; that he would like to die. The great and friendly God then tries to turn his heart from himself to the vast city of Nineveh. He reminds him of the thousands of babies so tiny that they cannot tell their right hands from their left. Would it not be a tragic thing to destroy them? He reminds him of all the cattle, the dumb unquestioning servants of men! Ought they to be brought grimly to a terrible death? And with the tender words—the tenderest in the Old Testament—about the babies and the cattle, the book closes.

It is clear that the author of this book, from ■ heart almost broken, looked out upon the increasing selfishness and hardness of heart among his people. How gentle his sympathy! How far-reaching his understanding!

And speaking of the babies in Nineveh,

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

I must tell you how I made peace with Germany after the Great War. I had spoken in cantonments all about the United States as we were preparing to fling ourselves into the great contention. I had crossed the sea in 1918 in one of the ships of a great convoy bearing thousands of soldiers to the other side of the Atlantic. The fires of those fierce days had burned brightly in my own heart.

Now the war was over and I found myself in the city of Hamburg, which so lately had echoed with the feet of soldiers marching off to fight the Allies. I rode about the city with a powerful English journalist whose own son had made the great sacrifice during the war. We looked at the gardens of Hamburg—at the flowers so brightly blooming. “They do love beauty,” said my friend, wistfully. He took out the photograph of the fine Cambridge lad, his son whom the war had taken. We gazed at the young face together. At length my friend spoke: “We must make the world a good place for all of us—foes and friends,” he said. “That is the only way to justify the great sacrifice.”

“It is worth a trip over the Atlantic to

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

hear you say that after your own experience," I said softly.

And so perhaps I was prepared for the episode which occurred that evening. We had seen many people during the day. The Germans of Hamburg were busy. They evinced a great industry. But the faces were hard and sad and sometimes sullen. There were no smiles anywhere. I sat alone in the great railroad station that night waiting for the members of my party to join me. Near by my eye fell upon a German woman. At her feet played a tiny girl just able to toddle about. And while I watched idly, the tiny girl, seized by some childish whim, came toward me. My knees were rather widely apart. The German baby came and stood between them, putting one chubby hand on one of my knees and one on the other. Then she looked up at me with the most radiant smile. I sat looking into the eyes of that baby, and in that moment made peace with Germany. You cannot hate babies. The world must indeed be made a safe and good world for babies everywhere. So the great word of the book of Jonah became part of my own experience.

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

Two Old Testament books, then, bear eloquent witness to an understanding of the dry rot which was making Israel ■ cold and selfish nation. Then there is the tremendous passage I have already read regarding the highway of friendliness joining Assyria and Israel and Egypt. The more one studies these words the more astonishing—almost unbelievable—they become. Assyria and its capital, Nineveh, were hated as few countries and few cities of all the world have been hated. For the little nations of that far Eastern world, Assyria was the symbol of invading cruelty, and Nineveh the very synonym for all that was terrible and brutal. Nineveh was the loot city of the ancient world, fat with the treasure of ■ thousand ravished towns. The inarticulate cry of all the little countries which loathed and feared Nineveh with dark and terrible depths of feeling becomes vocal with explosive passion in the little Old Testament book of Nahum—a veritable taunt song lifted over the city which the prophet sees in ruins.

And if Assyria was hated with all too good cause, Egypt was suspicioned with a constantly deepening feeling, for Egypt was

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

the coquette of the ancient world, inveigling little nations into hopeless wars and failing them in the hours of their extremity.

Yet it is of these nations that we read that, together with Israel, they are to be a blessing in the earth; a highway of friendliness is to unite them, and they are all to be the glad and happy possession of the living God. Here the highest peak of daring faith in the Old Testament lifts its white summit sharply against the sky.

Now, how are we to unite the two attitudes expressed in the highway of friendliness and the highway of exclusiveness? The exclusiveness which shuts out the evil is necessary, but it easily hardens into the very selfish and cold complacency which was the bitterest foe Jesus had to fight. The friendliness which extends joyous, welcoming hands to all mankind is a glorious thing, but if without discipline and a sense of moral values, it debauches and disintegrates the life of those who practice it. There are those who by democracy mean a type of life where all people meet on a low level in order that everyone may be comfortable. There are those who mean by democracy that all op-

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

portunities should be open to all men who are willing to prove worthy of them. The democracy which casts away standards is a repudiation of civilization itself.

We must conclude, then, that we must build the highway of exclusiveness and we must build the highway of friendliness. And we must so construct them that the two highways shall converge. The highway of holiness must become friendly and the highway of friendliness must become holy.

Here, as so often, Jesus speaks the revealing and defining word; and here, as so often, his life puts into action the principles which his words express. He asked the most sordid and soiled people to travel with him in that highway of friendliness where he walked, and as they moved along together the genial highway of friendliness became the highway of holiness as well.

The dramatic episode of Zacchæus puts the whole matter into vivid memorable action. Zacchæus was the sort of man who quite evidently did not belong in the highway of holiness. He belonged to the unclean who are not allowed to walk there. He gained his fortune by being an official of the hated

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

Roman oppressor. And he was dishonest in his personal dealings. Such as he would be a poisonous and corrupting influence in the highway of holiness. Clearly, they must be shut out.

But Jesus, much to the surprise of Zacchæus and everyone else, asks that he may be a guest in the house of this dishonest traitor. He treats him as a social equal, as a person to be held in honor. The sneering foes of Jesus look on with cynical relish. Clearly, they have caught the Galilæan prophet in a trap from which he cannot escape. He will never emerge in credit from this bit of folly.

But the bad man to whom Jesus has been too friendly speaks. Jesus has uttered no word of condemnation. The great prophet has been so happy and human and friendly that he has almost broken Zacchæus' heart. And the hard, dishonest man breaks out in words of complete commitment to Jesus and his way of life. He turns from ill-gotten gain. He accepts a new Master in a life lonely and bitter enough with all its worldly success. That very hour the highway of friendliness in which Jesus walks with Zac-

## THE TWO HIGHWAYS

chæus becomes the highway of holiness too. For the dishonest official of the Roman oppressors has become a new man with a new purpose. It is the very genius of Christianity to bring men into the highway of friendliness and to lead them at the same moment into the highway of moral and spiritual victory as well. The glad eyes and the happy heart of Zacchæus tell the tale of the strategy of the work of Jesus in the world.

The strange and baffling problems of modern life are seen in new fashion as the light of the mind and heart of the founder of Christianity falls upon them. He is all the while uttering the word of reconciliation. And his capacity to form a meeting place for the highway of friendliness and the highway of holiness is perhaps his supreme service to the world.

## XIII

### THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE

“Holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof.”—2 *Timothy* 3. 5.

THE religion of Israel was the noblest religion of the ancient world. And it is a significant fact that if we leave out of consideration the religion of the Hebrew prophets, the noblest religion of the ancient world was that worship which has been called the religion of fire-worshippers. The nature religions, with their emphasis upon fertility and all the productive processes of the vegetable and animal world, tended to degenerate into an overemphasis upon sex, whose worst expression was found in sacred prostitution. On the other hand, Zoroastranism, with its fundamental emphasis upon the sharp cleavage between good and evil, naturally felt a propulsion to go forward upon ethical lines,

## "THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE"

and the symbol of fire naturally suggested the heat which warms and the light which illuminates. Quite apart from this symbolism, religion at its best has always been a fire in the world. It has brought warmth and spiritual comfort to a world of freezing cold, and it has brought noble illumination to a world of ethical darkness. We cannot quite ignore the fact that sometimes its fire has been destructive. Indeed, wherever there is fire there is always at least a remote possibility of conflagration. More crimes have been committed in the name of religion than in the name of freedom. Religion hath her cruelties more darkly renowned than war. But all of this is where the fire of religion is set burning lawlessly. When it is doing its best work in the world religion brings something more than sweetness and light. It brings warmth and light. And so it becomes the dynamic force in civilization itself. It is the fire at its heart which saves ethical religion from mere cold correctness. It is this fire which saves its good works from a certain type of

"organized charity cold and iced

In the name of ■ cautious, statistical Christ."

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

And when civilization itself seems to be entering upon processes of decay, it is religion which gives a soul to all our physical knowledge, which gives living and creative quality to all the processes of the mind, and which puts into all human relationships a genius of goodness and productive good will. It comes to all these aspects of civilized life as the fire which warms and the light which illuminates. And in this deep and searching sense it keeps the soul of the world alive. It causes us to see in all earthly things the dim and shadowy promise of their own perfection and it sends us forth to the seeking of that perfection with a deep and abiding sense that in this quest the universe is on our side. It is the spirit of assertion in a world of doubt. It is the spirit of life in a world of death. It is the fiery energy which puts all the promise of the future into that glorious perpetual burning which is never consumed.

We are quite prepared, then, to see what a tragic thing has come to pass when religion itself loses its vitality. We are prepared to see what heaviness and lethargy settle upon the world when, to apply in this connection

## “THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE”

an arresting phrase of a brilliant Irish poet, religion itself becomes “the worship of an extinct fire.” We are surprised to find that this sort of thing began to happen very early in the life of the Christian Church. In fact, it was already a noticeable phenomenon at the time of the writing of the document known as the Second Epistle to Timothy. In this letter we find a sharp and anxious reference to people “holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof.” That word *μορφή* suggests a noble movement of Greek speculation. For the invisible reality, to the most understanding thought of Greece in respect of spiritual things, was more than an ineffable beauty beyond the reach of man. It possessed a power to bend form to its own purposes, until the visible became the expression of the invisible, and the real became incandescent with the mastering and determining presence of the ideal. So the form was the point at which the idea became the actually present potency in the world which we see and hear and feel and touch. The author of the Second Epistle to Timothy carries the thought into regions of dark and tragic disillusionment. For he sees

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

that the form beginning as the creation of an ideal life in the actual world may become a shell from which all life has fled. And the tragic thing about a shell lies just in the fact that once it was alive. It is the hard and dull reminder of a lost vitality. There are those in the church, says the author of this Epistle, who have the form of godliness but have denied the power. They are like tenantless shells lying on the shore and cast about by the flowing and ebbing tide.

It is a curious characteristic of institutions that they may preserve their structures when they have lost their life. Like those dead trees which stand stark and leafless in the midst of a forest, they remain stern monuments of the vitality they once possessed. The essential characteristic of any living organism is the presence of heat. There is always combustion where there is life. There is always fire where there is vitality. When we are loyal to a form from which the heat has fled, we become indeed the worshipers of an extinct fire.

Lord Byron once wrote a terribly lurid and dramatic poem entitled "Darkness." It told the tale of what happened to the world

## “THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE”

when the fire in the sun was extinguished, when the sun had burned up and no flaming radiance and gloriously glowing heat moved out from it to the waiting worlds. In the midst of the darkness and cold men burned everything which would burn in a last and bitter attempt to secure a little heat and a little light. It was a battle foredoomed to failure from the beginning. Men by the millions came upon a miserable death. At last two wretched creatures, the last human beings in a dead world, sat crouching before the spluttering embers of the last fire which would ever glow upon a planet whose life was at an end. Darkness and cold had claimed this once beautiful and luxuriant world as their own. And in a moment their victory would be complete.

Something like that is involved in the death of religion in the world. “Quench, then, the altar fires of your old gods, quench not the fire within,” cried Matthew Arnold. But the very point is that whenever the altar fires of religion are quenched, no fire can be kept burning within. A universal reduction of religion to lifeless form, a universal denial of its power, would mean at last the vanish-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

ing of any sort of inspiration from the life of man. Civilization has no greater stake than that involved in keeping religion alive in the world. It has no more urgent responsibility for the sake of its own perpetuity than that of rekindling the embers of religion when they are burning low. If it values its own life, it cannot allow religion to become the worship of an extinct fire.

Any cool and dispassionate analysis of our Western civilization must lead us to see that the determining influence of religion is decreasing over great areas of human life. That fresh and vigorous sense of creative power which characterizes the great ages of religion can scarcely be said to be noticeably present in our time. The very massive programs which lead to so much activity in many churches are often a substitute for spiritual vitality rather than its expression. If science has not made materialists of us all, a certain interpretation of the facts which science has brought within our ken has made materialists of a good many of us. If the new psychology has not caused man to seem an animal whose mental and moral and spiritual experience has little more actual

## "THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE"

meaning than the vermiform appendix, a certain interpretation of Freudian principles has put the animal in the saddle, so that it drives a good many minds whither it will. If our growing skill in production and transportation and salesmanship has not caused us to feel that mechanical efficiency is more important than personality, it has at least depleted the atmosphere in respect of that oxygen in which personality thrives. And since religion has a great stake in all these things, the fire has burned low in the great furnaces in the good ship religion. The engine room suffers from lack of attention. The great ship flounders in treacherous seas.

We have already suggested that religion carries the fate of civilization with it. Religion cannot come upon bad days while life itself grows more rich and full in all the things which belong to a growing and advancing society. And so we are not surprised to find that as the fire of religion burns low, as the warmth and light of its diffusion decrease, all other life feels a corresponding depletion. To put it in the most obvious fashion: life becomes less interesting as the fierce and vital energies of religion wane. To

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

put it more adequately: only the fires of religion can forge the great bolts which hold society together. All human relations begin to fall apart lacking this cohesive force. At the opposite end of human interest from the altar of religion something miserably fails. You begin to examine the causes and, to your surprise, you are led at last to the altar where you behold ashes instead of a living flame. When the power of godliness is gone the breath of life is taken from all the trumpets on all the hills.

The supreme need of our time, then, is the rekindling of the fire of religion. Its massive forms are all about the world. State churches and free churches and churches of the most far-reaching imperial claims have built their structures into the very fabric of the life of all the world. The form is present. But the afflatus, the potency, the fire of religion is in no such way visible as we look about the earth. The blowing into flame of the dimly burning wicks of religion is the task to which men are called in our time. For when that flame burns brightly there will be a new hope for the world.

The prophet Ezekiel was a man of pene-

## "THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINGUISHED FIRE"

trating mind. And one of his most baffling problems was the problem of a dead religion. He tells us how he stood in a great valley of dry bones. The very bones were scattered. Life had said farewell, and grim death had conquered. There came into his mind an amazing question—Could these scattered bones yet live? Could these sad and gloomy reminders of a lost vitality become the form of a new and vigorous life? The question became a daring hope. The hope sharpened into a divine command. And lo, the scattered bones came together. Upon them came flesh and vital organs. At last the form was perfect. A great army of beautiful bodies waited for the touch of life. But that inner fire which comes with breathing had not yet begun to burn. No hearts were beating. No breasts were heaving. No nostrils were drawing in the life-giving properties of the air. Then, at the divine command, came the potent word of prophecy. The minds became messengers of thought. The hearts began to beat. The furnace began to burn. The chests began to heave. The nostrils were inflated. An army of bodies became an army of living men. The valley

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

of dry bones became the valley of a glorious resurrection. It is an exquisite allegory which men will not willingly forget, for it tells of the coming of life to a lifeless world. It tells of the rekindling of an extinct fire.

Now we must ask how the great thing can be done in our own age. How can we cause the fire to burn again upon all the altars? How can the power of godliness be put within its lifeless form? We must drop all metaphors and come to the concrete facts of life as we attempt a reply. And the reply will first of all take the form of an appeal to history, for in one age after another the thing has been done. And these great memories have guidance for us as we approach our own task.

Benedict renewed the life of religion in the sixth century because he put the heroism of a great willingness to sacrifice within forms which were settling into a hard rigidity. The truth for which you are willing to suffer leaps into new life whenever you endure burdens in its name. Hildebrand, in the eleventh century, renewed the life of religion because there was no bribe which could buy him, no prize which could tempt

## “THE WORSHIP OF AN EXTINCT FIRE”

him from his unfaltering allegiance. One incorruptible leader can galvanize a dead church. Francis renewed the life of religion in the thirteenth century because he set all Europe to singing. A song can wing the spirit of man from the very gates of death. Calvin renewed the life of a great section of the church because he seized upon a masterful and mastering idea—the sovereign God who makes the kingly man. An idea freshly apprehended and unhesitatingly obeyed may sow seeds of renewal all about the earth.

Age after age men have found the embers burning low upon the altars, and in these and how many other fashions they have set the fires glowing again! Really there are no extinct volcanoes in the Christian Church. There is always a fiery center from which leaping flames may climb to the summits of the highest mountains.

What, then, of our own day? The beginning at least of an answer to the question may be put quickly and simply. Every time an individual man takes all the risks of making the great personal affirmation of loyalty to Jesus Christ and all that his principles and his Spirit mean there is a new flashing

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

into flame of a dimly burning ember. And as these flames multiply there are a new light and a new heat about the earth. There is always a summons for one to face to some action which is necessary if the Spirit of Jesus is to be expressed in the world. And every such action is like the striking of a match in a dark place. There are no end of complicated matters with which men will have to do as religion becomes potent and commanding in a new way in the life of our day. But the guide through all the vast labyrinth is that adventure of personal loyalty to Jesus which renews the life of the individual and makes it possible for men to become a part of the new society which is to remake the institutions of the world. The form of godliness becomes the power of godliness whenever the will of a man sets the fire burning upon the altar.

## XIV

### “KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD IN THE MIND”

“Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”—2 *Timothy* 3. 7.

THE pursuit of truth is the most fascinating adventure in all the world. We are tempted to think very highly of human nature when we read the tale of all those valiant men who have given themselves with persistence and unflagging zeal to its demanding efforts. It is a tale made of many tales, each vying with all the others in sheer and amazing romance. Here we find an authentic Arabian Nights whose figures do not fade away at the touch of cool and honest investigation. It would have been wonderfully diverting to stand with that curious being hidden in the mists of long forgotten years, who, beside the bank of a stream he could not ford, knitted his brows

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

in the cruel perplexity of the beginning of thought. At last he spied the trunk of a tree lying in the water. An idea slowly emerged in his mind. With grim toil and the light of expectation in his eye he shaped the trunk of a fallen tree to suit his purpose and pushed it into the water. His faith was justified. The tree trunk floated! And now came the next stage of the experiment. He balanced himself upon the trunk of the tree and was borne triumphantly upon the water, the current which he had already observed carrying him to the other side of the stream, a little lower than the point of his venturing upon the tree trunk, but still quite safely on the other side. This was the beginning of the great process which has consummated in the mightiest ocean liners which now plow the deep. It was a slow process. The thought came to some early man that making a hollow in the tree trunk would increase the comfort and safety of floating upon it. Another observed that a pole could be used to change floating to something which at last became rowing. One pole became two. Two poles became oars. Then the idea of a pole fastened securely in

## KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD

the boat—as it had now become—and bearing some light yet resistant fabric against which the wind would blow, led to the construction of sails. The pole used in the rear of the boat became the rudder. And so the adventure of water travel moved on apace. Oars were multiplied. The triremes of the Roman Empire moved in stately fashion about the great sea. Sails were constructed with more perfect understanding, and at last, after centuries, the clipper ships moved in gallant beauty about the Seven Seas. Steam was applied to navigation and the coquettish winds lost their power over man's seafaring life. Greater size and greater speed came to the ships. At last a passenger vessel became a huge modern hotel with every comfort and every luxury, moving at tremendous speed across the sea, bearing thousands of men and women from one continent to another. Wireless messages brought the news of the world, printing presses put daily papers into the hands of the passengers, and every luxury-loving taste was ministered to with bewildering efficiency. The sea, which had once been the home of tough fibered men of daring, became

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

the home of soft sybarites carried from land to land in the lap of opulence.

It is a great tale and yet a tale not without its quality of tragic disillusionment. For who shall say that life is a nobler and manlier thing to those who sail in our mammoth ocean palaces than it was to those who fought in the very teeth of hard-blowing gales in their queer little ships? Who shall say that the body of knowledge represented by all this advance in the science and art of sea craft has been made in ample fashion morally and spiritually productive? Who shall deny that, measured by any sufficiently high standard, a good deal of it is knowledge that lies dead in the mind?

And this one story is the symbol of a thousand others. One day I was walking on an avenue of an American city when I observed an aeroplane flitting about in the sky. It was soon evident that there was method in its madness and that great smoke letters were being written in the sky. One was diverted by the thought of what words would really be great and commanding enough for that lofty use. The man who uses the sky as the page of a book surely

## KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD

ought to be a man with a supreme mind and with words all potent with transcendent meaning. As a matter of fact, the bird man whom I was watching wrote in the sky words giving high and flaunting publicity to an article connected with a pleasant vice whose attractiveness may be very great but which surely has no connection with any deep and abiding reality. The morning sky had been secured as an advertising section of an aerial newspaper! And is this not typical? Do we not make great discoveries and then put them to little uses? We travel very rapidly but we have no important place to go. We fling our words upon the sky, but we have no very significant thing to say.

For five years I had the opportunity of standing in a pulpit whose message was broadcast each Sunday. It was a rather astonishing experience in those early days of the use of the radio. When I suffered from a bad cold whose effect was evident in my preaching, I heard about it from the most distant places. I had actually coughed all over the United States! The preaching opportunity was of magnetic and staggering proportions. I suppose every man who has

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

had such an experience must often have thought humbly and sadly of the really supreme preachers to whom no such opportunity ever came. It is a rather solemn and terrifying experience to preach at one time to vastly more people than Paul or Chrysostom ever addressed without having the mind or the message or the power of persuasion of these mighty men. Our control over the forces of nature has grown in almost magic fashion. But productive use of our new powers has developed so slowly that the thought of it leaves us blushing with shame.

You can put it all into one telling illustration. The same chemicals combined in one fashion make the most deadly poison gas, and combined in another fashion make a very wonderful fertilizer. Already we have used the poison gas in the most deadly of wars which has left its trail of death across continents. In no adequate way have we set about using the fertilizer to cause the desert places of the world to blossom as a rose.

Have we put the case strongly? There is no end of evidence which we have not even touched. Think of the use of modern machinery in ways which dwarf personality

## KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD

when by the means of this very machinery personality might be released from burdens and set free for ampler life! It is surely impossible to deny that at least in the physical world a good deal of our knowledge has been put to no adequate use. It is knowledge which lies dead in the mind. We are ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Is the case better with man's mental life? Here we come upon another field of glorious and ravishing adventure. The very fact that men stand back and look at the world and at themselves and ask questions is a kind of badge of nobility. You feel your way back to the day when Thales in the sixth century before Christ came upon the thought that perhaps everything is an aspect of some one thing; all the variety the manifold experience of a unity which lay majestic in the heart of things. What an achievement it would be if one could discover the one principle whose many facets shine with all the kinds of color which delight the eye of man! And so Thales set about the search for the one element which in many forms might account for all the vast tale of change. The

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

very existence of such a quest comes to us as a golden memory. And when Anaxagoras pronounced the word "mind" with that curiously sharpened accent which indicated that he had come within sight of the idea that the mental might be the explanation of everything else in the world, to what perilous and glorious heights man's thought had climbed!

One thinks of the great systems of speculation which have come from the masters. One thinks of Plato disappointed with the grim realities of this all too disillusioning world and flinging into the sky his radiant dreams. This, he declares, is the world of reality, and the world in which I dwell is only real insofar as it participates in those perfect ideas which live forever in the stainless splendor of their own perfection. One thinks of the mighty lift which this daring and heroic thought has given age after age to the life of our whole Western world.

Or, confronted by the curious contradictions which emerge in our daily experience, a man stops suddenly and says: "There is truth in each of these contending positions. They seem to contradict each other. But

## KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD

that only makes it clear that a higher truth must be found which does justice to the elements of truth in each of these ideas now armed for battle." And the quest for the reconciling truth sets men upon new adventures of the mind. So that vast system which we associate with the name of Hegel has enriched the life of the world.

It is a long and glorious tale. And a few men in every century have made the most of it. But dare we say that all the ingenious skill of the mental life of man has been made available and productive and enriching so that it has become the actual heritage of everyday people all about the world? To put the question is to answer it. The great and fruitful thinking of the masters has left quite untouched the life of untold masses of men. It is knowledge lying dead in the mind, or at least lying dead in the libraries. And when we look over the ledges into the abyss and behold all the misuse of mental power, all the adroitness by means of which the reason has been turned to ignoble uses, all the prostitution of intelligence, and on a higher level the still deadly experience of the dry rot of the mind, the corroding scho-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

lasticism which seems inevitably to follow the period of mental awakening, we are forced to admit that, glorious as is man's mental heritage, here too he has been ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

There is another great body of knowledge which is part of the treasure of the race. This is the laid-up store of human experience. It is our fund of knowledge as to men's relations with men. You find it in all the histories which men have written. You find it in the amazing mass of biographies of men of every race and of every clime. And you find it in the whole body of literature which tells of human passion and pain and hope and fear, and of all men's adventures with their fellow men as they have lived together in this anomalous world. Now and then someone realizes what treasure trove can so be found. Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Free Saint George in Edinburgh, kept his library in two sections. One contained simply his collection of biographies. The other contained all the rest of the books which he possessed. The division is very significant. Doctor Whyte felt that in the

## KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD

tale of the lives of individual men and women he possessed a supreme kind of worth. Sir William Robertson Nicoll once said that he never read a biography so poor that he did not get something from it. If we begin with great biographies, and move on through great histories, and then plunge into that fiction and poetry in which master minds interpret the relations of men with their own kind, we soon discover that human life is a richer, more manifold, more potent, more astounding thing than we had ever known before. We find tragedy and sordidness and debauchery too. But the glory of this garden of humanity is all the more wonderful against the background of duplicity and shame.

Now quite obviously—may we not say?—the very meaning of education lies in the bringing to seminal and growing minds this whole treasure of knowledge about humanity. To have been oriented in the great human story, to have found the mighty heroes, to have brooded deeply over the supreme interpretations of all human relationships, is to have entered the temple of a noble and productive learning. Can we say with

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

happy pride that this is just what an education means to our modern boys and girls? The reply is not a pleasant one. There are exceptions of course. But, broadly speaking, the new generation grows up almost without fruitful and inspiring contact with this great body of luminous knowledge. We teach boys and girls how to classify facts. We seem to have lost the art of bringing them into glowing contact with creative personalities and creative writing. This glorious body of humanity lies dead in the mind. Here again knowledge is forever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth.

How can we give life to all this mass of dead knowledge? How can our knowledge of the physical world be made morally and spiritually productive? How can we develop an instinct for the finding of that knowledge of human experience which gives to the voice of conscience a new authenticity and to the spiritual life a new and alluring radiance?

The answer, like all great answers, has a certain quality of beautiful and gracious simplicity. If you will bring all your knowledge to Jesus Christ, he will touch it into life

## KNOWLEDGE THAT LIES DEAD

and power such as you have never conceived before. He will turn the valley of dry bones into an army of triumphant soldiers. He will put a soul into the mute and motionless form of knowledge and you will behold it rise with light in its eye and a thrill of mighty energy in its voice. I rode from the railroad in the Mediterranean valley to Jerusalem this summer in a motor car. It was a splendid ride on a crisp and delightful morning. We moved over the valley, through the foothills, then on to the heights where the venerable and storied city sits on a kind of natural throne. It seemed strange to go to Jerusalem in a motor car. A camel would have seemed more natural. But the experience suggested a pertinent question. Can the motor car be brought into the realm of the Lordship of Jesus? Can he master our world of wheels and belts and dynamos? Can the Master of a civilization of camels be the Master of a civilization of motor cars? And here, again, the reply may be made triumphantly. Only as he gives a soul to our vast material civilization may we be said in the deepest sense to live at all. As he masters its wheels and belts and dynamos

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

for his high purposes the modern world begins to experience that life which is life indeed. Without him everything dies. Touched by him everything lives. He gives a soul to science, a creative mind to philosophy, and he gives us the key to the understanding of human experience. When we have learned the meaning of two words, "Christus Veritas," our knowledge will no more lie dead in our minds, and it will no longer be possible to say of us that, ever learning, we are never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

## XV

### UNDERSTANDING AND PARADOX

"Think not that I came to destroy the law . . . Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished."—*Matthew* 5. 17.

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you."

—*Matthew* 5. 21, 22.

As you read these words of Jesus you have a sudden, happy sense that he did not try to make life simpler than it is. You have the same flash of vital energy, the same quick turn to other relationships, the same emerging of unabashed contradiction which appear all the while in actual experience. The speech of most men gives you the feeling that all the while you are being led farther from the astounding, complicated business of living. The words of Jesus give you the feeling that they ~~are~~ are one with life itself.

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

No end of brilliant men are all the while trying to make life simpler than it is in the name of formal consistency. They are the masters of a very dangerous simplification of life which at its best is an escape from experience rather than a confronting of experience, and which at its worst quite loses contact with candor and honesty. The man of letters is often a particularly clever and effective sinner in respect of these matters. He seizes upon some aspect of life, lifts it from all complicating relationships, captures its quality in a potent and vivid phrase, and then goes about with an air which suggests that he has solved a difficult problem. In reality he has called in the magic of a persuasive pen in such a fashion as to distract attention from a problem which he has neither faced nor solved. C. E. Montague, whose own pen knew the secrets of a singular felicity, as well as an astonishing honesty, recently wrote with understanding appreciation as well as with critical candor of the charm which Matthew Arnold exerted over eager and quick minds in a generation a little behind ours. It is not hard to understand the fascination of that style whose dis-

## UNDERSTANDING AND PARADOX

tinguished restraint somehow glowed with light, and we would not care to forget the debt we owe to the clear eyes and the cool courage which made that style possible. Yet after the passing of the years I think most of us must feel that many of the phrases whose bright luminousness exercised such power over the minds of his contemporaries owed much of their impressiveness to the magic which evades an issue by making it seem simpler than it is. And if this can be said of the high priest of a superior and conscious sincerity, what must we say of lesser men?

### THE SIMPLIFICATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY

If the man of letters gives to life a dangerous and unreal simplicity through the magic of a deceptive phrase, the philosopher is all the while tempted to an oversimplification of experience by means of a powerful and impressive process of dialectic. The beginnings of Greek speculation reveal this tendency definitely at work. Thales in the sixth century before Christ is trying to find one element whose varied forms will account for all the vast diversity of life. The sub-

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

stance of the Eleatics represents quite unconsciously an oversimplification of the problem of existence. And as the centuries go by systems of philosophy built about pure intelligence or about the will share in the same defect, however unlike they are in other ways. It is quite easy for philosophy to become a Procrustean bed which would impose a certain form upon reality, rather than an ample and friendly resting place for the mind which makes room for all the disconcerting facts of life.

It is, of course, inevitable that life will make its own protest against this sort of treatment. If the Eleatics insist that life is in essence unchangeable substance, and Heraclitus declares that the very essence of life is change, the wise reconcilers are sure to appear with the claim that existence has an aspect of changelessness and an aspect of change. So Democritus leads the way among those who try to make philosophy as large and manifold as the facts of life.

At last this attempt to find a higher unity which reconciles seemingly contradictory positions is made the defining matter in one of the most commanding of modern inter-

## UNDERSTANDING AND PARADOX

pretations, that far-reaching and massive process of dialectic which we associate with the name of Hegel. As a matter of fact, in all sorts of ways, just when you have settled into some sort of content with a noble and far-reaching thesis, its antithesis comes marching up like an army with banners. And then comes the quest for some harmonizing principle which will do justice to the truth in each of the divergent points of view. The perpetual return of Hegel, just when we think we have done with him, is a tribute to the inevitable importance of this synthetic approach to life.

### SOLUTION BY PARADOX

There is another method by which we can make terms with the manifold and intractable elements of experience. This is the direct dealing with the clenched antagonisms of life by means of paradox. Dean Shailer Mathews has described an epigram as a half-truth, so stated as to give discomfort to those who hold the other half. No doubt there are brilliant controversial possibilities within the reach of the master of paradox. But as a matter of fact, paradox at its deepest and

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

best is the method by which a daringly honest mind insists upon being loyal to all the facts of life, even at the expense of formal consistency. We are familiar with the thought of the "paradox which comforts while it mocks," but the really notable paradoxes comfort without mocking at all. The paradoxes of Jesus have a strange simplicity and sincerity. There is no self-conscious cleverness about them. They grow out of the very nature of life itself. Viewed in one way, the past is something to which you are to be completely and unhesitatingly loyal. Viewed in another, the past is something which is to be changed. Not the dot of an "i" or the cross of a "t" is to be changed, and yet "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you."

Once and again we have all been amazed by the fashion in which the clear thrust of the words of Jesus proves their adequacy in the terms of situations and relationships far away from those which inspired the words which he uttered. It is so with regard to his interpretations of the antinomies which emerge when one considers the past. On the one hand, there is the organic view of

## UNDERSTANDING AND PARADOX

life, which emphasizes continuity and the right of the past to impress its deepest sense of order upon the world to-day. And unless life is to be indeed "a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing," we must find a place for this deep continuity. Not one real meaning emerging from past experience must be treated lightly. On the other hand, there is the dynamic view of life with its call for daring adventure and creative initiative. And unless life is to become rigid and sterile we must keep the sense of creative adventure alive in the world. In its name we must follow Jesus when he says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, . . . but I say unto you." And the very point of the whole discussion is that we must not put the organic and the dynamic conceptions one against each other. We must have both.

St. Loe Strachey, in a fine passage in one of his latest books, spoke of the fashion in which, when the modern scientist climbs to some lofty peak of achievement, he is surprised to find on that far summit a gleaming arrow shot to the heights twenty-five hundred years ago by some brilliant Greek. In a profounder fashion we may say that when

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

the most penetrating and candid modern thinker comes to a clear insight into those subtle relations of life which can be expressed only by paradox, he finds that Jesus preceded him in this very quality of understanding centuries ago.

### THE PERSONAL READING OF LIFE

But Jesus' use of paradox is more than an incidental expression of his honesty. It involves the use of a method for dealing with the many-sidedness of truth. There is a capacity to understand through paradox which has very far-reaching significance. And it is bound up with a sense of life as personal. There are no end of contradictions on the level of mathematical logic, which quite happily resolve themselves into harmony on the level of personal experience. The whole matter of freedom and necessity is the best example of what we mean. You can never reconcile freedom and necessity on the impersonal level. In personal experience each finds its place in a quite astonishing fashion. Life is full of this sort of thing, and it is best understood and best expressed by means of paradox. Because he made

## UNDERSTANDING AND PARADOX

actual the possibilities of personality as no one else has done Jesus was a supreme Master in these things.

The loving person gives to life both unity and richness. And in the relations which are secured by loving personality, dominated by ethical passion, all the manifoldness of experience is nobly related to that unity of purpose which gives final meaning to life. The paradoxes which express the impact of loving, ethical personality upon the world give us such a contact with reality as we can secure in no other way. They are the actual embodiment of experience. They lead us to deep and abiding understanding.

To follow Jesus through the ways of his paradoxes is to come to a new apprehension of the meaning of life. To understand the technique of the paradox as a means of reaching truth is to secure a new and powerful intellectual implement. And through it all there rises the sense, so secure in the teaching of Jesus, that you do not have to make life simpler than it is in order to deal with its materials. And this honesty and understanding come with healing and guidance to the world to-day.

## XVI

### EMANCIPATION AS A TEST OF TRUTH

“The truth shall make you free.”—*John* 8. 31.

MEN'S adventures with truth are among their most extraordinary experiences. A famous man used to tell how as a small boy he was sent to carry in chips of wood from the wood pile. He stood before the pile of chips with one of those moments of sudden and strange awareness which come to children and to men and women. There was the pile of wood. Here was he, the little boy. He was not the wood pile. It was something outside himself. And yet it was something with which he had to do. Some such experience as that is the beginning of the adventure of humanity with truth. There is the world outside. Here is the human mind. In one way they are set quite sharply out against each other. And yet this hard, astonishing world of things is ■ world which

## A TEST OF TRUTH

in part, at least, man's mind can understand. And it is surely a world which he can use.

I like to feel my way back to that curious creature away in the primeval mists, that creature with the promise of intelligence so strangely lurking in his life, who wandered about among the ancient forests, and found that he could hold his own with the wild beasts who made night a terror and even day a menace. One fancies him standing not far from a dead tree in a great storm. A flash of lightning rends the tree and sets its dry branches on fire. As they fall to the ground the startled creature watching them runs off in terror. But there is something besides terror. With a kind of furtive curious courage, he turns and begins to retrace his steps. It is almost too much to ask of his dim beginnings of self-control. But he comes on, and greatly daring at last he seizes the cool end of a branch which is burning, and runs off holding it in his hand. He is almost surprised that the strange bright thing does not turn upon him and take his life. But no, he is its master, as he carries it about. He holds it to some dry branches. They ignite and burst into flame. He allows

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

his hand to come too near the fire. It bites like ■ wild beast. All the while he is learning. Soon he has made it his servant to give him light and heat, to drive wild beasts away in the night, and to bring warmth to his cold and shivering body. Most significant of all he learns that fire always behaves in certain ways. You can learn its habits. You can depend on them. He has come to know a new bit of truth about the world in which he lives. And he has found astonishing emancipation from darkness and cold. Already the truth has begun to set him free.

Gradually man learns that the whole world is a vast treasure house of secrets, whose meaning he can master and whose power he can use. This world over against him is not a world where anything can happen in any way. It is a world you can come to understand. It is a world you can depend on. It was made to be the servant of intelligence. At least intelligence can use it and so achieve such freedom and such power as were beyond the farthest dream. By the time of Aristotle the whole matter has been inspected by a really great mind. Here is a block of wood. It is the material of which

## A TEST OF TRUTH

■ chair may be made. Very well, it is, then, ■ material cause. But there must be a plan of the chair in the mind of the maker. Indeed, a picture of the chair may have been drawn before the chair is made. This, then, is the formal cause. But, after all, the maker of the chair must do his work. He is the efficient cause, and so the chair is brought into being. But there is something more. In the mind of the maker of the chair there was a purpose, ■ thought of a weary man or woman sitting in the chair after hard and exhausting labor. And this is the final cause. It is the final cause which tells the secret of all men's actions. And may it not be that this world which man can use so effectively was made for just such use? May not the world have a final cause in the mind of the great intelligence who has fashioned it? So the noblest thinkers have dared to believe. The truth which sets men free was made a possible experience for just that consummation.

But the truth is not always used to set men free. This vast body of knowledge, which with the passing of the centuries has become physics, chemistry, biology, and

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

many an allied science, can be used in many ways when it is applied in practical fashion. It can be used to exploit nature. It can be used to exploit men. There are, indeed, two sorts of men in the world. There are those who secure profound insights which they use for the good of men. There are those who live by their wits, shrewdly manipulating such knowledge as they possess to further ends which are neither noble nor upbuilding. They use the raw material of new lands in such a way as to turn these lands into a desert. They use their wits to control other men, and they do it in such a way as to leave waste and desolation behind them. If our whole experiment of living in the civilization of the past has made any one thing clear, it is just the fact that control over all the vast forces of nature may have very tragic and desperate results, unless it is accompanied by that growth in self-control, that submitting of the forces of human nature to the mastery of high principles which eventuates in moral character and in spiritual power.

We advance, then, from the thought of that truth in the physical realm which may

## A TEST OF TRUTH

emancipate, but may also enslave, to that truth in the moral and spiritual realm which, moving with imperial power, carries the secret of perpetual freedom.

It is from this point of vantage that we begin to apprehend in a new fashion the pre-eminence of Jesus. He did not make a direct contribution to our knowledge of physics, or chemistry, or biology. He did open the door to the sort of knowledge which will make the vast powers which practical science has brought within our reach a blessing and not a curse to men. The organization of all the forces of the individual life about a central purpose of unselfish love produces the sort of man who can be trusted with all possible power over the material world. The building of society into an organism of good will is the securing of a social conscience which will bend all the new knowledge to the uses of the enlarging life of man. There is no permanent freedom, either for the individual or for society, apart from the principles which were central in the teaching and the life of Jesus.

The sources of his power come from even deeper regions, however, than we have

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

already indicated. The darkest thought which can come to man has to do with doubt of the universe itself. Does it care for unselfishness? Does it further the interests of moral love? It was the great claim of Jesus that he knew what the universe is about. He would not have used this phrase, but he did clearly claim that he knew the secret of life. And at the heart of life he found the mind and the conscience and the heart of a loving Father. He found a justification for man's rarest hope, and his highest aspiration in the life of God. It was not merely the principles he taught which proved emancipating. It was these principles as the expression of the very nature of the Eternal God, and so the ultimate matters in the universe itself. If in Jesus you know what God is like, you do come upon a great emancipation. If in Jesus you know what the universe is like, you have the charter of a new freedom. The putting of his word in the center of the individual life gives a new capacity for the discovery of moral and spiritual truth. That personal commitment to the faith of Jesus, that God and the universe are as he believed them to be, releases forces and potencies

## A TEST OF TRUTH

which remake the moral and spiritual fabric of life.

To be sure, the working out of these principles in the individual and in society is a matter of centuries. Indeed, it is a matter of millenniums. All the realms of truth and goodness and beauty, all the regions of social relationships, of economic and industrial and political organization, are to feel the power of that creative good will which found embodiment in the life of Jesus. And in all these regions he is the Great Emancipator.

But at the very heart of all this discussion lies an insight of far-reaching significance. If it is of the very nature of truth to provide a vast release of power which had never found expression, if truth by its own inherent quality will set men free, it follows very surely that only that which emancipates is true. That which dwarfs and disintegrates, that which depletes and devitalizes, reveals its falseness by the very fashion in which it works out in the life of men. Emancipation is the achievement of truth. It is more than that. It is the test of truth. It is an Ithuriel's spear by which you detect the differences between truth and falsehood. That

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

which enslaves is not true. That which secures for men a permanent freedom carries the seal of truth in this very achievement.

There is no more searching question than that which has to do with the method by which we may reach a position of certainty. How can we be sure? There are doubtless ■ good many tests. But I venture to believe that the words of Jesus which we are discussing this morning give us a standard of singular potency. The emancipating is the true.

We can only make a few suggestions as to the application of this principle. There is a school of contemporary writers whose shibboleth seems to be that the unlovely and the unsavory alone represent the truth. The only way to tell the truth is to describe the ugly and the evil. And the more ugly and the more evil the things you describe the more sure you may be with ■ kind of exultant assurance that you have told the truth. So the contagion of all sorts of debauchery is given lovely literary appeal which spreads a subtle poison in the minds of men. This sort of thing, of course, is the denial of the real meaning of life. But because it has no

## A TEST OF TRUTH

creative moral power it is seen to have lost contact with truth. To be sure, we must be candid and honest, and we can smile to-day at the singular lack of sense of humor which caused the *Edinburgh Review* to say that there were things in Browning's "Ring and the Book" which ought never to have been put upon the printed page. But it is clear enough that with all Browning's almost unbelievable honesty, he always sees evil against a background of good, and he always sees good as structural in the life of the universe, as sure to have the last word. "I knew a necessary change in things." It is only that which is morally and spiritually emancipating which can make any claim to have touched the central truth of things.

In a very curious fashion a truth seen out of perspective has a way of becoming false, and a truth which must be supplemented by another truth which does justice to some other aspect of experience, when emphasized without that supplement, may become actually menacing. Here again we may apply the test that the true is the emancipating. The Christian communions have much to learn at this point. Under the dome of Saint

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

Peter's, Mr. Gladstone was profoundly impressed by that vast solidarity for which the Latin Church has ever stood. But solidarity, unless supplemented by a sense of individual freedom, becomes not emancipating, but enslaving. That glorious witness of the independent tradition to the rights of the individual man standing stark and lonely in the presence of the living God is an immortal thing. But it needs to be supplemented by some sense of solidarity, or it tends to become anarchy. That glorious sense of the wonder of the inner life filled with a consciousness of the presence of God which gave potency to the eighteenth century revival is a mighty force in religion. But if it is not supplemented by the critical action of cool intelligence, it tends to become a hectic and exotic thing. The brilliant dialectic of the Reformed interpretation of religion has always made Christianity intellectually commanding. But if it is not warmed and enriched by a noble mysticism, it tends to become hard and dry and lifeless. And so one might go on. If we test our loyalties by their power to give permanent emancipation, to set free the fullest and ripest

## A TEST OF TRUTH

powers of our lives and of the life of the Christian Church, we shall be led from the fragmentary to a vast synthesis which will make us free indeed.

It is in life itself that these great matters must be worked out. If we put the word of Jesus with all its creative potency in command of our lives, and if we test every sanction which would command our allegiance by its power to set free the whole life of the individual and the whole life of society, we will move with a new assurance through the difficult ways of our human adventure in this baffling world. It is in the experience of emancipation that we find satisfactory contact with truth.

## XVII

### DECISION AND INSIGHT

"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching."—*John* 7. 17.

THE relation of the personality of a speaker to the words which fall from his lips is a matter of curious interest. A clever writer has spoken of the people who quite unconsciously put a minus sign in connection with everything which they say, and of others who with equal unconsciousness attach a plus sign to all their speech. There are men of such radiant personality that they seem to light little torches, putting them inside their words, and making every word incandescent.

The study of the conversations of Jesus is much more than the inspection of a masterly use of every situation. That he was a master of deft and brilliant verbal sword play goes without saying. But behind all his sure and swift thrust and parry there

## DECISION AND INSIGHT

was something very different from the delight in skill for its own sake. He was always stripping the chains from some noble thought. He was always freeing some truth to do its work among the minds of men, and however trivial or unpleasant the circumstances, he had a way of lifting the atmosphere to a new temperature in which it became possible to think clearly and wisely and with sure understanding. Even in conversations he was always turning liabilities into assets. From the most unpromising discussion he would bring forth a principle which the world would not willingly forget.

It would be difficult to imagine a situation when the atmosphere was more completely charged with cold and penetrating hostility than that in the Temple where Jesus had been teaching. Even so his words were full of such quiet commanding assurance and insight that men marveled. They could not deny the impressiveness of his utterances. But they had a sneer when they failed of an argument. This man was without the discipline of the schools. He was not a man of learning. He did not belong to the order of established and accredited

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

teachers. Obviously, there was a flaw somewhere, though his words had a sound of wisdom and understanding.

This spirit of ugly and carping criticism was enough to cut a sensitive person to the heart. Jesus gave no sign that he was disturbed by it. Rather he saw an opportunity which he must utilize. These men had lifted the question of how one could be certain that a teacher spoke with authority. It was a great question and it deserved an adequate reply. Going far beneath the surface of the matter and capturing its deepest meaning, he declared: "Truth is a moral and spiritual thing and it is accredited by moral and spiritual tests. If a man gives his whole-hearted allegiance to a decision to do the will of God, that man can test my teaching. His own unhesitating decision will equip him with insight. You cannot judge a man when you know only his intellectual history, you must know his moral history and you must bring to bear upon the situation a moral history of your own."

There is almost a touch of magic in the deft turn by which Jesus puts his critics on the defensive. They had been calling atten-

## DECISION AND INSIGHT

tion to his lack of intellectual discipline. He quietly lifts the question as to whether they have had enough moral and spiritual discipline to make them capable of detecting the difference between the true and the false. It is far and away more than sharp and devastating retort. It is the bringing to light of a principle which is basal in dealing with all moral and spiritual experience. At the moment when you decide to give yourself to the highest you know you come to have such an apprehension of its meaning as you never possessed before. The hour of moral decision is the hour of insight. The will is an Ithuriel's spear by means of which you can form judgments. The will is the true ethical teacher. The will is the true theologian. If a man willeth to do the will of God, he shall know of the teaching.

We are lifting a question of a good deal of significance when we ask to what degree this principle is implicit in the moral and spiritual history which lay behind Jesus in the life of his own people. The old Testament Scriptures constituted a kind of university in which the boy Jesus had matriculated, and by and by he became master of

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

all that ~~was~~ taught in this ancient school. It is interesting to remember in these days when some men and women of very sensitive conscience are beginning to fear that the Old Testament writings are not good enough to be made the companions of boys and girls, and that, after all, a body of literature which had so much to do with forming the mind of Jesus may do fairly well with modern boys and girls. But we are asking at the moment if that great body of moral and spiritual experience which is reflected in the Old Testament confirms the position which Jesus takes regarding the relation of the hour of moral decisions to the hour of moral insight.

In point of fact, the central matter with regard to the Old Testament ~~is~~ teacher of moral and spiritual principles is just that these principles emerge in the midst of an experience of life and not in the hour of irresponsible contemplations of life. The moral heights of the Old Testament are reached in the teachings of the prophets, and the prophet is a man who gives himself completely to the doing of the will of God, and in the hour of moral surrender finds supreme

## DECISION AND INSIGHT

and authentic insight. The prophet Amos is tending sheep on the edge of the wilderness and by a sharp incision taking the bitterness from a curious kind of fig. He has wide-open eyes for the caravans which pass by. He sees the heights of Jerusalem in the distance. He studies and appraises the ways of men. At last "the thought of God takes hold on him." He gives himself unhesitatingly to that vision of God's character, and so comes a passionate insight which he pours forth in the words, "The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" And when at the lascivious royal sanctuary at Bethel he is silenced and driven away, the very hour of suffering for the will of God which he has been declaring gives him new assurance, and he goes away to write the oracles which the ears of men have rejected, and this is the beginning of literary prophecy. Willing to do the will of God, the vision of Amos arose vivid and authentic.

Beneath the surface of the whole Old Testament experience of religion lay the principle which Jesus announced to his critics. And it is not too strong a putting of the

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

case to say that he found it there. There is really, however, a more intimate matter, of which one must speak very reverently, but of which one may speak, I think, without hesitation. It would be a most profitable exercise, which would, indeed, require a subtle insight of its own, to go through the Gospels marking those words of Jesus in which is found a touch of autobiography; and the most suggestive passages of all would be those in which, without at all asserting that it is so, Jesus is clearly drawing upon the deepest and most significant experiences of his own inner life. Among these passages the one which we are discussing has an importance all of its own. Jesus himself had a moral and spiritual history. He himself had a method for finding certainty. It was as he gave himself with an abandon of personal commitment to the doing of the will of his Father in heaven that he became certain what that will was. There is an authentic moral passion about his teaching which is quite different from the cool authority of the merely analytic mind. He has entered the moral arena. He has battled for truth. He has given himself to truth.

## DECISION AND INSIGHT

He comes forth not as a master of detached observation, but as a victorious warrior. His authority is the authority of personal struggle and personal victory. His insights are the reverse sides of his moral and spiritual decisions. In the strain and stress of his own struggles he had learned that the will holds the key to assurance. The detached spectator does not quite acquire certainty, however honest of mind he may be. In the desperate hour of moral decision, when the will commits the whole personality to the doing of God's will, the light shines and the way is clear. It was so that Jesus came to speak with authority and not as the scribes.

A principle so profound should move like ■ hidden river beneath the life of the Christian Church, now and again emerging with a bright gleam in its vitalizing waters. And the understanding inspection of the twenty centuries of Christian history reveals just this to be true. If the history of the church proves anything, it is this: the hour of moral and spiritual adventure is the hour of insight. The moment of high moral decision is the moment of certainty. The will is the true theologian.

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

I may select two or three examples from the so abundant material. In the dramatic crisis of the fourth century Athanasius stands out like a knight in armor fighting for the faith. And the interesting thing about the whole situation is that while the issue is so clearly intellectual the biography of Athanasius leaves you feeling that you have been dealing with a warrior rather than a thinker. Or, to put the matter more adequately, it leaves you feeling that you are dealing with a leader who was a thinker because he was a warrior. In one critical period he cries out, "It is our all that is at stake." And here, as in his whole life, you feel the sense of a truth which is won through struggle even more than it is won through analysis. And the struggle is not merely with external foes. It is an inner struggle in which the insight emerges. It is not merely Athanasius *contra mundum*. It is Athanasius against another inner Athanasius who would stand back from that moral struggle and that moral commitment in which only the highest possible conception of the person of Christ is adequate to the demand of the hour. As the years went by

## DECISION AND INSIGHT

Athanasius became more urbane and grew in sympathetic understanding of other men of other mental processes. But to the day of his death his central insight and his supreme assurance grew out of a moral struggle in whose agonizing experiences he committed himself without hesitation to the will of God.

Saint Francis may seem to be a person different enough from Athanasius. You may be tempted to say that he did not have a mind. He had only a heart. If there is any truth in such an assertion, you must add at once that the heart has insights of its own. And you must be frank enough to add that from the heart of Francis there went forth influences which changed the life of Europe. On the cathedrals which had been constructed with gargoyles before the days of Francis there now appeared happy little angels with fluttering wings. He taught all Europe how to sing. And from this new joy in life there came no end of impulses which affected the intellectual life of the Western world to its very depths. How, then, did Francis attain an assurance which went deeper than the powers of thought and

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

discovered the very sources of creative joy? You see him as a young man kneeling before the figure of the Crucified. And in that hour of devotion he seems to hear a voice which says, "Build my church." Very literal is his untutored mind, and he begins to gather stores for the task. Only gradually does he come to understand that the structure upon which he is to work is the vast invisible temple of the living God in all the world. But in that first hour and in all the great hours and days and years which followed he gave himself to the way of obedience. He willed to do the will of God. His decisions leaped like a sword from the scabbard in answer to the divine behests. And so he found certainty. And so he found joy. He had no will but the will of God. And in that will he found not only the peace of which Dante later speaks, but an unhesitating assurance which changed the face of Europe.

Let us turn another page of history. And now it is the sixteenth century. A weary captive serving in the galleys sees the distant heights which he associates with moral and spiritual opportunity in his loved land of Scotland. And as he continues the round

## DECISION AND INSIGHT

of his hard and bitter task this sturdy, strong man, whose will is bent to the will of God as his body is held in bitter and serving captivity, feels the flame of a great assurance. Once more he will stand a free man on those distant heights. Once more he will speak for the God whose will is his supreme passion and whose purpose is his most mastering desire. You cannot study the life of John Knox without being forced to the conclusion that he lived at the place where the will and the intellect meet. In him Christian thought always becomes Christian action. And Christian action sent its clarifying rays all along the far passages of Christian thought. It is as he sternly gives himself to the will of God that he achieves a rocklike certainty upon which a new and glorious Scotland is to be built.

There is really no end to such illustrations of the principle which Jesus so clearly announced. The hour of joyous commitment to the will of God has been an hour of new assurance at every period in the life of the church. The hour of decision has been the hour of insight. The will has proved a masterful theologian when the steps of dialectic

## IMPERISHABLE DREAMS

have faltered, and the voice of formal logic has been lost amid the noises of life. When men have willed to do the will of God they have apprehended the very quality of that teaching upon which their souls may live, and after whose fashion society may be remade.

It is not of Athanasius, or Saint Francis, or John Knox that we must be thinking as we come to an end of our discussion. It is of a young man—nameless yet in his untried youth—at the portals to-day of thought and adventure and achievement. And it is to him with all the vast and gracious promise of his youth upon him that we say, "If you will to do the will of God, you shall know." The hour of decision is still to be the hour of insight. And the hour of insight will be followed by years of memorable achievement.









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